



இதழ்

A Cultural Journal



1916-2004

M.S. Subbulakshmi Centenary Special





Appeal to Mothers

ஸங்கீத தீபத்தை மங்காமல் ரக்ஷித்துத் தருகிற புனிதமான
I wish to make a special appeal to Mothers to take up

பொறுப்பைத் தாய்மார்கள் தொடர்ந்து ஏற்று, தமது மக்கட்
the sacred responsibility of keeping the lamp of

செல்வத்துக்குப் பாலப் பருவத்திலிருந்தே ஸங்கீதத்தில்
Sangeeta burning bright in their homes and to instill

ஈடுபாட்டை ஏற்படுத்த வேண்டும் என்று கேட்டுக்
a love for good music in their children, from a tender

கொள்கிறேன். தாய்மார்கள் அடுத்த தலைமுறையினருக்கு
age. If Mothers create this taste for music in the next

நல்ல ரஸிக உணர்வை ஊட்டினால் நாட்டில் ஸங்கீதம்
generation, it will spread throughout the country;

பெருகும்; அதாவது பக்தி பெருகும்; அதாவது மக்களின்
consequently Bhakti will also spread and ultimately,

நல்வாழ்வு பெருகும்.

our people will lead good lives.



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Letter from the Prime Minister



प्रधान मंत्री कार्यालय
नई दिल्ली - 110011
PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE
New Delhi - 110011

MESSAGE

Prime Minister is happy to learn that Sri Shanmukhananda Fine Arts & Sangeetha Sabha is organising centenary celebrations of Bharat Ratna Dr. M.S. Subbulakshmi.

Dr. Subbulakshmi's contribution towards the promotion of Carnatic music has been unparalleled. Her musical offerings in many languages, particularly of the devotional genre, have truly brought diverse cultures together and promoted Carnatic music to the world stage.

Prime Minister conveys his best wishes to the organizers.

(Chandresh Sona)

New Delhi
10 July, 2015





Dr. M. S. Subbulakshmi

Centenary Celebrations

Inaugural Festival

Date	Day & Time	Particulars
13.9.2015	Sunday 6.00 p.m.	<p>Inaugural function. Shri. Vidya Sagar Rao, Hon'ble Governor of Maharashtra presides. Special felicitation and conferring Sri. Shanmukhananda Dr. M. S. Subbulakshmi Sangeetha Pracharya Special Award to Smt. Radha Viswanathan.</p> <p>Part II</p> <p>Sangeethanjali to MS Amma - rendering of songs that were her favourite by</p> <p>Smt. Gayatri Venkataraghavan - <i>Vocal</i> Shri. B. Raghavendra Rao - <i>Violin</i> Neyveli Shri. Skandasubramaniam - <i>Mridangam</i> Alathur Shri. Rajganesh - <i>Kanjira</i></p>
14.9.2015	Monday 6.00 pm	<p>Commencement of Golden Jubilee of Maitreem Bhajatha (sung in the United Nations Assembly on 23.10.1966). Shri. E. S. L. Narasimhan, Hon'ble Governor Andhra Pradesh and Telangana presides. Conferring Sri. Shanmukhananda Bharat Ratna Dr. M. S. Subbulakshmi Sangeetha Pracharya Award to Dr. T. K. Murthy.</p> <p>PART II</p> <p>'Manikka Veena' (revised) by Smt. Revathy Sankkaran</p>
15.9.2015	Tuesday 6.00 p.m.	<p>Conferring the Sri. Shanmukhananda Bharat Ratna Dr. M. S. Subbulakshmi Sangeetha Pracharya Award 2015 to Centenarian Chemenchery Shri. Kunhiraman Nair, Kathakali Exponent (completed 100 years on 12.7.2015). Shri. Oomen Chandy, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Kerala presides.</p> <p>PART II</p> <p>Golden Jubilee of Pidi Arisi Thittam of the Mahaswami of Kanchi.</p> <p>"The Mahaswami and MS" - a special tribute "Shatabdi Samarpanam" by</p> <p>Ms. Amritha Murali - <i>Vocal</i> Shri. R. Raghul - <i>Violin</i> Shri. N. C. Bharadwaj - <i>Mridangam</i></p>
16.9.2015	Wednesday 6.00 pm	<p>'MS forever' Centenary tribute. Smt. Sumitra Mahajan, Hon'ble Speaker of Lok Sabha presides. Shri. Devendra Fadnavis, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Maharashtra is the Chief Guest of Honour.</p> <p>Release of Special Postal cover on 'MS and Sri. Shanmukhananda Fine Arts & Sangeetha Sabha' by the Department of Posts, Maharashtra Circle, Government of India. Conferring the Sri. Shanmukhananda Bharat Ratna Dr. M. S. Subbulakshmi Fellowship in Music to 50 young and promising musicians.</p> <p>PART II</p> <p>Felicitations of Shri. K. V. Prasad and Shri. R. K. Shriramkumar.</p> <p>Sangeethanjali to MS by the fellowship awardees.</p> <p>Ms. K. P. Nandini - <i>Violin</i> Shri. R. Raghul - <i>Violin</i> Shri. N. C. Bharadwaj - <i>Mridangam</i> Shri. Praveen Kumar - <i>Mridangam</i></p>





In first person...



I was only ten years old when I sang at a 'wedding concert' for my family friends who were originally from Saurashtra but had settled long ago in Tamil Nadu. I was a little shy, but I must say I enjoyed being on stage, with the lights on me and everyone listening to my music. My mother was my first guru. She continued to teach me even after I had taken some lessons from great Vidwans. I consider Musiri Subramanya Iyer and Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer as my gurus. I think a vocalist should study the Veena to understand the subtle nuances of the voice. The veena can provide a clue about the gamakas and how the notes are linked. The veena which can be heard within the sanctum sanctorum of a temple and the nadhaswaram whose majestic music can fill vast open

spaces are the two great treasurers of Carnatic music.

Mama had a keen eye for detail and was always very discerning about selecting the songs I was to sing. I really don't know how he hit upon the idea of making me learn the Suprabhatam and the Vishnu Sahasranamam. He appointed pundits, and Radha and I took several months to learn and perfect them. Recording sessions were also long and demanding.

Once we were in a temple in Hardwar. By the time we got there it was eleven o'clock and the temple was closed. So we were just looking around. Suddenly Mama asked me to sing some bhajans. I tried to explain to him that the temple was closed and that there was nobody there to listen to my music. He, however, insisted saying : 'You must sing for God'. So I sat near a pillar and started singing, with a couple of friends who had accompanied us for an audience. Within minutes a small crowd had gathered around us. I don't know from where all these people came, but they wanted to hear more.

All my life I have been a student, learning new songs, practising for three hours a day. I can't say that I have favourite songs, but each new composition which I present on stage gives me a special feeling of satisfaction. The reaction of the rasikas (audience) gives me great joy. Of course, in the past, we always looked to Mama for his approval. He was our best critic.

Many great accompanists have played for me. I have learnt a lot from them. Violin maestros like Mysore Chowdiah and Tiruvalangadu Sundaresa Iyer played for me when I was quite young. The Mridangam master T. K. Murthy has also played extensively for me. At a private concert even Palghat Mani Iyer played the mridangam for me, and the great Chembai Vaidyanatha Iyer played the violin as my accompanist. They have been good to me and I will always cherish happy memories of them.





In first person...



My gurus guided me in many details on music. I have followed certain principles strictly in my music. Even after sixty years of singing, I get very anxious before a concert and pray that everything goes off well. However, once I sit on stage and the planned songs follow each other in quick succession. I tend to forget everything else. Of course it is by the grace of God that I was able to sing in so many concerts, here and abroad. My Carnegie Hall concert for the Hindu Temple Fund was as memorable for me as the UN concert. The hall was mostly full of Americans and they were very appreciative.

Good music is the same everywhere. The basic requirements are clarity of sruti and tala (tone and rhythm) and strict adherence to these.

For a vocalist, voice practice is important. It has been my habit to learn the meaning of the songs I have sung, and the correct pronunciation of each word in them. One must then sing with feeling and emotion. Rather, the singer must not stand between the composer and the audience.

A concert should have enough variety to appeal to a wide audience. The heavy classical pieces should be evenly distributed amongst other songs. I always try to sing as many composers as possible. That ensures a good variety for people of varied tastes, Mama always knew the right sequence of songs.

A vocalist must have a rapport with the audience. The more appreciative they are of our music, the more inspiration we draw from their appreciation. I am grateful to my audience. In the north and abroad as well, my bhajans have elicited a great response. I think it is possible to give the best of Carnatic music in a two and a half hour concert.

The first Annamacharya song I was to record was Sriman Narayana. Mama said that I should sing it first in the temple at Tirupati. It was an inexplicable feeling....standing in the sanctum in front of the Lord. Radha was with me, and she quietly nudged me because I was in another world. And then I sang the song, I cannot describe the feelings in words.

Nowadays everybody is singing well. There is, however, an absence of the Gurukula system. That may explain the oversights in singing today. While it may not be possible to revive the old system of learning, students who learn music in colleges can still learn from an experienced vidwan for two to three years. I had the privilege of imbibing the nuances of many a great giant in classical music. I learnt songs from them, particularly from Musiri Subramania Iyer and Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer. The quest for perfection is unending and I will never cease to be a shishya.....

M. S. Subbulakshmi

(Source : Ode to a Nightingale – Lakshmi Vishwanathan)



M. S. and family

Angel of Immortal Glory

Smt. Radha Vishwanathan

When I was asked by Shri. V. Shankar to jot down something about my amma, Bharat Ratna M. S. Subbulakshmi, I did not know that I was being asked to perform an impossible job! Only when I put pen to paper, did I realise my difficulty.

She was the "Queen of Music" to millions of her fans throughout the world, from Mahatma Gandhi, revered Rajaji and Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. To me, she was everything in life. Words fail me when I want to convey how I miss her every moment of my life now. I never left her presence as a child.

I acted as Bala Meera in the immortal film 'Meera' which made her a national figure for all time - I never left her company as a small girl or even thereafter.



Radha as Bala Meera



Young Radha and M.S. sharing confidences

After my marriage, thanks to my dear, respected husband Shri. G. Vishwanathan, I stayed close to her all through her distinguished career in music. We shared confidences as no mother and daughter would ever have done. If her mother Smt. Shanmugavadivu of Madurai was her first mentor in music, M. S. was my only teacher in music and life.

My dear father Shri.T. Sadasivam was a patriot to the core. When she came into his life on 10th July, 1940, she entrusted herself completely to him. The illustrious couple became living legends. They dedicated their all to our motherland. Both became 'Bharat Ratnas', long before that title was officially conferred on amma in the year 1998. She learnt something from everyone she met in life and she remained a student throughout. The Lalitha Sahasranama addresses the Supreme Goddess as 'Sadashiva Kutumbini'. I have often felt whether that term was meant for my mother Smt. M. S. Subbulakshmi. The great seers of our land must have foreseen the advent of this 'Sadashiva Kutumbini' on this earth long before she married my father. In how many concerts in India and elsewhere have I sat by her side as an accompanist? My father called her 'Kunjamma' and to many of us in our family she was 'Kunjakka'. The only thing she ever knew was to love. She has showered her love in abundance on all devotees of the her divine music, known or unknown.



*Radha with
Sadasivam And M.S.*



I also wish to say here that I am deeply delighted that through the blessings of amma, her precious musical legacy will continue through my dear grand daughters, S. Aishwarya and S. Saundarya.

To Lord Balaji of Tirupathi, Bhagawan Shri Sathya Sai Baba of Puttarparthy, Maa Anandamayee of loving memory, Swami Sivananda of Rishikesh, Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi of Tiruvannamalai, the venerable monks of the Shri Ramakrishna Mutt and last but not the least, the Centenarian Paramacharya of Kanchi Mutt - Mahaperiaval, whom amma and my father worshipped as the very epitome of divinity in frail human form - to all of them and to many more and also to my beloved parents, I pay my namaskarams. I thank every one of you for giving me this opportunity to recall the 'Angel of Immortal Glory' that went by the name of M. S. Subbulakshmi.



◀ Smt. Radha Vishwanathan

Smt. Radha Vishwanathan is the daughter of Shri. T. Sadasivam and Smt. M. S. Subbulakshmi and has provided vocal accompaniment to M. S. for decades.

You sing like an angel

Dr. Gowri Ramnarayan

Running her hands over her singing throat, the blind and deaf Helen Keller exclaimed, "You sing like an angel!" Over seven decades, three generations of listeners have known the same exaltation in Madurai Shanmukhavadiyu Subbulakshmi's vocal magic. They see M. S. as a saint, even goddess incarnate. Her art transcends the sense and enters the sacred sphere of light. Living in the age when music became a packaged product for consumerists, often tailored for export, Subbulakshmi retained the old tradition of reaching out. Instead of shrinking into elitist classicism as a few purists did, she followed the singing saints of the bhakti cult. She sang in ten languages but never one word without internalising its meaning. Her own spartan living, and donation of most of her earnings to charity, made the singer merge with the ideals she sang about.

M. S. was born in Madurai on 16th September, 1916. Her auspicious Bharani star 'presaged' the conquest of the world. Mother Shanmukhavadiyu was a respected but impoverished veena player, supporting a family of three children, uncles, brothers, and their wives, all crammed into the airless rooms of a small house on Hanumantarayan Street. Now the house is marked by a small metal image of the veena nailed above the threshold.

Kunjamma (as she was called at home) was to know the perplexities of seeing her lawyer father living with his own family in an adjacent street. But Subramania Iyer was exceedingly fond of his "Rajathippa" (princess). He singled her out to ride with him on the open carriage bearing the portrait of Lord Rama through the streets on the days he offered bhajanai to the deity. It is he who gave Kunja her serene features, and "made me see that bhakti was everything." Her father had shown her the ardour of devotional singing, much before husband Sadasivam put bhajans on a par with classical compositions.





Sibling bonds with Vadivambal and Saktivel were a source of joy in their restricted life. The children absorbed music from the air around them. Vadiva would play the veena while Kunja sang, and Sakti drummed along. "He was very good on the mridangam," M. S. would say with pride. After his death her voice trembled, "Now I have none to call my own." Bedridden at 87, her mind slipping into unconsciousness, "Anna!" was the name she called out in yearning, along with Amma and Appa. She had returned to her childhood world.

The family just about managed to survive. Kunjamma knew only coriander coffee and country jaggery, and grew up always checking to see if others had enough before helping herself to anything. But the home was rich in music. The nadaswaram players in temple processions would stop by Shanmukhavadiyu's home and play their best. Mother made music, while musician visitors sang and played instruments from gottuvadyam to jalatarangam. They invariably asked Kunjamma to sing, and blessed her. Being asked to sing another piece or a cryptic "You must come up well," meant high praise. Some of them even taught her a song or two. Devotion to god, respect for elders, self-effacement and humility were part of her home culture. Her fawn-like timidity was her own. She was never to lose it.

Did the child know she was gifted? Beautiful? "Mother was a woman of few words. I remember how irksome she found it when she spread my thick, curly hair over the washing stone and cleaned it with *shikai* and water. We didn't talk about talent. We were simply told to practise." Singing came to little Kunja as leaves to trees, bees to flowers. Her concentration was phenomenal, it gave her perfect shruti alignment, and raga fidelity. There was nothing else to think about except music. She heard the temple nadaswaram, a few concerts, the neighbour's radio (they didn't have one), and folk songs from street beggars. Singing was as inevitable and essential as breathing. Listening to the tambura was rapture.

Schooling was given up after a beating by a teacher, which aggravated her whooping cough. To the family's amusement, an old mendicant pilgrim took upon himself the task of teaching Kunjamma the grantha script, as also Sanskrit shlokas. Formal music lessons began with Srinivasa Iyengar, whose sudden death was a shock to the child. (Years later, she was to be similarly disheartened by the demise of doyen Mazhavarayanendal Subbarama Bhagavata, who had started training her in pallavi singing).

By this time, Kunjamma had already begun to sing with her mother's veena on the stage. This happened as a matter of course, without fuss and fanfare. When mother cut a 78 rpm record in Madras, the accompanying child too was asked to do her bit and that is how the impossibly high-pitched Kambhoji in *Marakatavadivu* released her voice on the gramophone 'plate'. In course of time, concert notices announced "Miss Shanmugavadivoo" as accompanist to "Miss Subbulakshmi of Madura."

The scrawny girl on the stage dressed with provincial gaucherie, wore imitation jewels and glass bangles, and a row of medals pinned to her shoulder. "I looked awful, but so did most of us, not knowing any *naagarikam* (finesse)" she would chuckle. However, Kunjamma began to draw people's attention with her limp voice, winsome expression, and childlike demeanour.

What warmed her heart and boosted her confidence, never high though, was encouragement from senior musicians. The irascible laya maestro Dakshinamurthy Pillai not only asked her to sing for a family wedding, but praised her pure voice and emotive approach in public, before a galaxy of musician guests.





Veenai Dhanammal was another to express cryptic approval when Shanmukhavadiyu took her daughter to see the redoubtable old lady in pattinam (Madras).

By the 1930s, Madras had become the capital of Carnatic music and Shanmukhavadiyu shifted quarters (a garage in Georgetown), trying to establish her daughters' career, little knowing that Thiagarajan Sadasivam would enter into Kunjamma's life and take her away, into dizzying heights of success.

Employed in marketing the Tamil weekly Ananda Vikatan, freedom fighter Sadasivam came to monitor a photography session of the young artiste. His fearless strength promised her the security she craved. She had no hesitation in entrusting herself to his care. In 1940, they were married in Tirunermalai, with Kasturi Srinivasan, The Hindu, and "Kalki" Krishnamurti witnessing the registration.

Sadasivam had lost his job. "Surely you and I can earn a hundred rupees each per month, enough to manage," said Kunjamma. She was talking about Sadasivam's family of two daughters, an orphaned nephew and niece wholly in their care, an aged grandmother, and numerous relatives who needed to be financially assisted, housed, educated, married and treated in times of ailment. Hidebound grandmother Mangalam was to leave the brood in charge of M. S. with these guidelines before departing to Varanasi: "Make sure that Ambi (the nephew) goes to college. Get the girls married suitably. I know you are God fearing and will observe every *pandikai* (religious festival) with customary rites; remember we don't have *navaratri kolu* or *varalakshmi nambu* in our family."

Kunjamma thrived on the love she found among the children in her care. She fed, oil-bathed, clothed and showered affection on them. Her evening Ovaltine making was a ritual treat. Moonlight nights found the children nestling round her on the terrace, as she ladled out curd rice with a drop of *vathakuzhambu* into each hand by turn.

Elder daughter Radha and M. S. became and remained inseparable. The vivacious, intelligent child was to become more than M. S. Subbulakshmi's right hand through the decades of glory. Radha was her vocal accompanist, emotional support and sympathetic companion until her illness in the 1980s, a shock from which M. S. never wholly recovered.

M. S. acted in four films (1937-47). 'Savitri' was to raise money for Sadasivam and family friend "Kalki" Krishnamurthy to launch a nationalist magazine. 'Meera', the last, made her a national icon, and in a sense, made her know herself. The shy girl from Madurai could hold her own with experienced film actors, and make American director Ellis R. Dungan weep unabashedly when she sang, every note throbbing with the rapture of devotion. Dungan is credited with giving her a new 'look', best suited to highlight what he called "ethereal" features. That quality of course, came from within. Did she not swoon before the Lord in the Dwaraka sanctum? For that moment, film became reality.

M. S. was a lifelong learner. Until her last concert, she continued to acquire compositions in several languages from a host of practitioners as varied as Narayanrao Vyas, Dilip Kumar Roy, Srinivasa Rao, A. Kanan, S. V. Venkatraman, Papanasam Sivan, Musiri Subramania Iyer, Piano Vaidyanathan (who set *Vaishnava janato* and *Hari tum haro* to music for Gandhiji), G. N. Balasubramanian, Sandhyavandanam Srinivasa Rao, K. V. Narayanaswami, Nedunuri Krishnamurti et al. Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer was her revered guru, influencing her to think more





deeply and ripely about raga and kriti. He taught her the imposing compositions of the great vaggeyakaras in his burnished pathantara. He judged her to be the best to revive the forgotten 72 melaraga malika, which demands a hair's breadth swara precision. From the north, Begum Akhtar had wanted to teach M. S., but it was Siddheswari Devi who came to live in her Kalki Gardens home for six months and taught her thumri, bhajan and even chhota khyal. It used to be a thrilling experience to watch the two doyennes sing raga scales, Siddheswari Devi rolling the 108 beads each day to keep count. When the disciple finally sang a chhota khyal on the stage, the beaming guru was in the hall to approve.

For the last 25 years of her life, her music, rehearsals and recordings were monitored by self-effacing Kadayannallur Venkatraman. He set to music many of the Annamacharya lyrics that the Tirupati Devasthanam commissioned her to propagate, as also a host of other M. S. favourites from *Kandu Kandu* to *Kurai onrum illai*. There was a special relationship with M. S. always wanting everyone to know his contribution and Venkatraman fighting shy of any publicity.

Though M. S. did not become as internationally known as Ravi Shankar, or later, Zakir Husain, she did introduce Carnatic music to the West in a significant way first at the Edinburgh festival, later at the United Nations Assembly, and the coast-to-coast tours of the U.S.

Nehru's prediction that Subbulakshmi's music would cross the barriers of culture came resoundingly true. The Times, London, 1963, thought her an "excellent introducer of the beauties and intricacies of Carnatic Song." The New York Times exclaimed in 1966, "Her vocal communication transcends words... Subbulakshmi and her ensemble are a revelation to western ears." No compromises for audiences from circles wider than NRIs. The same expansive alapana overflowing with brikas and gamakas prefaced *Sarjadalanetri* in her signature Shankarabharanam, or *Kaligiyunte* in Kiravani.

Fellow artiste Rukmini Devi Arundale once quipped, "Kunjamma, you must leave some awards for others!" But M. S. had something more than the rain of awards: the adulation of *pamara* (lay) and *pandita* (erudite) listeners. Listening to her Vishnu Sahasranamam, Agnihotram Thathachariar could wonder, "How does she have that flawless enunciation that we scholars are unable to achieve through several birth cycles?" Householders innocent of Sanskrit, identify with the bhakti in the M. S. suprabhatams of Venkateshwara, Vishwanatha or Meenakshi. Though her Hindi bhajans made her known beyond the south, Subbulakshmi's Tyagaraja kritis too could keep North Indians in their seats. Pilgrims thrill to her voice amplified in temple *prakaras* from Kedarnath and Badrinath to Rameswaram and Kanyakumari. When she was given India's highest civilian honour, many declared that by accepting the Bharat Ratna, Subbulakshmi had conferred honour on the award.

Shaped by the liberal humanist ethos of their youth, the Sadasivams only vaguely realised it had crumbled in meaner climes. Sadasivam's own firebrand nationalism landed him in protests and prisons, and identified his wife with the freedom movement. Rousing nationalist songs were part of her concerts always. The couple remained close to national leaders from the Gandhi-Nehru era. Their loyalty to C. Rajagopalachari grew stronger in his times of adversity. Times changed, but their values remained constant. To M. S., her husband's word was law. Contradiction and argument were unknown. "If you surrender yourself, there are no problems left." It was as close as she got to a rebuke for a granddaughter's feminist leanings.





Conservative to the core, Subbulakshmi performed religious rituals with a meticulous faith. The Paramacharya of Kanchi had her total allegiance. When she lived in the Kalki mansion, it was before his life-size portrait that her lips moved in silent chants.

Subbulakshmi would not have known the meaning of 'secularism'. But staunch in her culture, she remained a stranger to bigotry. She had known what it was to be poor, insecure and marginalised. In the final analysis, it is her empathy for the downtrodden in daily life, not just in cheques donated on platforms that gave her music the quality of mercy.

*Courtesy - The Hindu



Gowri practising with M.S



Gowri performing with M.S.



◀ Dr. Gowri Ramanarayan

Dr. Gowri Ramanarayan is the grand-niece of T. Sadasivam, the vocal accompanist to M. S. (17 years), a journalist (The Hindu, 22 years), theatre director, playwright, translator of Vijay Tendulkar's plays and Kalki Krishnamurthy's short stories and has served as member, Fipresci Jury, at international film festivals.

My Earliest Memories of Ammu Patti

Seetha Ravi

It's hard, even impossible to say something about MSS which is not already known to her extended family of rasikas and admirers. The name unfailingly sets the listener's face a glow - as radiant as it would be while listening to her sing! What was the magic that pervaded her music and her personality, we wonder...After some futile efforts we stop seeking an answer to the question and settle down to just happily admire!

My earliest memories of Ammu Patti as we used to call her, go back to the birth of my younger sister Lakshmi in 1962. As typical to a South Indian family, my mother Vijaya had moved to her mother's house a couple of months before she was to deliver her second baby. I joined her after the birth of Lakshmi who was a fretful baby and kept us awake all night. I distinctly recollect Ammu Patti deeply worried over the nocturnal adventure of rocking Lakshmi to sleep in a *thooli*. There was an old-faithful Kamala to assist my mother full time and a number of cousins in the household always at hand to run an errand or do a chore. But Patti HAD to be there too..fussing and praying for the baby's circadian rhythm to get set right! Well,





Lakshmi took her time to give us our good night's sleep and that's how I first understood how serious Patti was about her domestic responsibilities.

She was equally serious about the moonlight dinner she treated us to during the summer holidays. The front verandah of the first floor at Kalki Gardens would bustle with activity. Grandchildren, their cousins, cousins' cousins, children of acquaintances or friends would be there. A noisy semi-circle of hungry kids (some badly overgrown ones too!) with outstretched hands. The hot *sambar saadam* would first be tasted by Ammu Patti. Often she would ask for more ghee to be added to it to 'tone' the tang and spice down for the younger ones. Blobs of it would be doled out by her patiently, till we emptied out vessel after vessel of it and followed it up with *thayir saadam*. She would hold the ladle of *vathakuzhambu* and gently perch a thick drop of it onto each hand with exquisite grace!

Such starry-night treats were rare and therefore not to be missed occasions for us kids. Not so rare were the dinners thrown for guests of various hues and nationality. Ammu Patti would be equally at ease with a Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan or a Siddheswari Devi as she was with a Sundakka or Chinnani Mami! Hosting was not easy, for husband T. Sadasivam was a stickler for perfection and the smallest of upsets would mean a hard day ahead! She took it all in her stride and unfailingly wore her lustrous silks and her best, beautiful smile!

Sleepless, noisy and demanding nights never let Ammu Patti oversleep. She would be up in the morning at her usual 5.30 a.m. and when I was ready to get out of bed, I would find her in the music room, freshly bathed and with her lovely curls cascading over her back. She would be seated with the tambura, singing by herself or looking into music notebooks written in her own hand. During summer vacation, Veenai Mama (K. S. Narayanaswami) would be there opposite her and the two would be playing *thaanams* of different ragams alternately on their veenais. From the threshold of the music room, I could peep into a world of indescribable beauty. I surely cannot recollect the ragams for I could not recognise them then, but the picture and the music would blend to leave a lump in my throat even as the memories do now.

It was the greatest of Art housed in the humblest of simplicity much like the well-worn handloom cotton saris that draped Ammu Patti's fragile frame during her last few years of life. Perhaps, such times were the best times of her life too, though she never declared so. For I understood in later years, that the seeking for Beauty and Perfection which filled the music room, was manifest in her concert music too. Why concert music, it pervaded the *Kanchadalayathakshi* that she sang for the nurses of St. Isabel's hospital, a day before she was discharged from there, post-surgery for a fractured thigh bone. The women in white stood around her coaxing her to sing and as she sat up in bed in her hospital gown, she broke into song, meticulously progressing through the sangathis, each repeated twice! As she neared the chittaswaram, she realised that she did not remember it and turned to me for being prompted. My ignorance did not please her and she admonished me to be back the next day at the hospital with the chittaswaram learnt by heart, so that she could render it properly for the 'sisters'!

Her last days at the hospital were pain-filled - for us rather than her. She would sweep the nurses off their feet with her regular and genuine enquiries about their health, family and breakfast! It was inexplicable that one so good to all, and so filled with beauty and so ethereal in her Art should suffer the pain of slow release from a body. In that too, she seemed to etch out a lesson for us - that the Hand of Life writes on its own and is bound by none or nothing.



After spending six nights with her at the hospital, I went to her birthplace of Madurai for some work. On the morning of December 11th, 2004, I was at the Meenakshi temple, praying and thinking of her so much. The priests enquired about her and at the Sundareshwarar *sannidhi*, the morning *poojai* and *deeparadanai* were followed by the *oduvamurthy's* rendering. Spontaneously, and entirely unaware of my presence or the circumstances, he sang the Vaitheeswarankovil padikam:

*"Peraayiram paravi vaanor aethum pemmaanai
Endrum pirivilla adiyaarkku vaarada selvangal varuvippanai
Mandiramum tandiramum marundum aagi theera noi theertharula vallan thannai...."*

"பேராயிரம் பரவி வானோர் ஏதும் பெம்மாணை
என்றும் பிரிவிலா அடியார்க்கு வாராத செல்வங்கள் வருவிப்பாணை
மந்திரமும் தந்திரமும் மருந்தும் ஆகி தீரா நோய் தீர்த்தருள வல்லான் தன்னை...."

It was as if Appar's lines had been written for Ammu Patti - 'The one who is the chant, the charm and the cure for the incurable - HE is at Pullirukkuvelur (Vaitheeswarankovil)'. She passed away close to midnight on the same day.

The poignancy of the experience at Sundareshwarar sannidhi remains with me, as do other precious memories of Ammu Patti. So does the music of M. S. Subbulakshmi remain - not just in my life, but in that of millions across the globe - it remains as *mandiram*, *tandiram* and *marundu* to the seekers of Truth and Beauty.

Courtesy - msstribute.org with the author's permission.



◀ Seetha Ravi

Seetha Ravi is the daughter of Kalki Rajendran and M. S. Subbulakshmi's daughter Smt. Vijaya and is also the former editor of the prestigious Kalki group of publications.

Reminiscences of my Grandmother

V. Chandrasekhar

I would like to thank the Shanmukhananda Sangeetha Sabha for having provided me with an opportunity to share my feelings with one and all on my grandmother's 100th birth anniversary celebrations. I appreciate the efforts taken by the esteemed Sabha to commemorate her birthday with a musical celebration.

All of us used to fondly call her "Ammu Patti" which means "loving grandmother". I had the good fortune of being under her care for about 3 years between 1973 and 1975 (as my father was officially transferred to Bangalore during this period).

Ammu Patti was an epitome of love and simplicity combined with total dedication to the cause of Carnatic music. Her devotion to her husband, my grandfather, has no parallel as she implicitly and meticulously ensured that his aspirations and wishes were implemented in her musical journey.

I wish to recall certain very pleasant memories during my stay at Kalki gardens with my grandma:

i. Musical practice in the company of her Guru:

Shri. Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer was a frequent guest of honour and happened to be my grandma's musical guru. It was a rare privilege to watch both of them





practising in a separate music room with Semmangudi mama intently listening to patti and joining her while at the same time correcting her diction wherever necessary. Grandma used to notate the songs learnt (hand written notation) and rehearse the songs through voice modulation in her Guru's presence. The dedication and enthusiasm which she displayed in learning new kritis and manifesting her 'Gurubhakti' was really extraordinary and remarkable.

ii. Hospitality to guests and flow of divine music:

Grandma had the privilege of meeting and hosting several notable personalities (spiritual heads, political personalities, scholars and well wishers) at her home. All visiting dignitaries were treated with utmost courtesy and warmth. The extent of 'annadanam' which was done by thatha and patti to all the people who called upon them cannot be quantified in words. Most notable and memorable guests during this period (which is still etched in my memory) are spiritual guru, Ma Anandamayi from Varanasi and Shri Dilip Kumar Roy along with his disciple Ma Indira Devi of Hari Krishna Mandir, Pune. They resided in Kalki gardens for a period of almost 2 weeks each.

The atmosphere reverberated with the divine music of grandma and I was truly fortunate to get the blessings of Ma Anandamayi and Ma Indira Devi (also known as Didi). I had the privilege of witnessing Ma Indira Devi being absorbed in a spiritual trance from which musical bhajans of noted Saint Mirabai would flow freely. These would be recorded, notated and sung by grandma. It was indeed a glorious music feast for all who visited Kalki gardens during that period.

iii. On concert days:

On concert days, grandma would not rest physically or mentally. Grandfather would finalise the list of songs to be sung and Ammu patti would be constantly rehearsing from the morning and invariably there would be little time for rest in the afternoon.

The attention she bestowed on her personal appearance and dress was something remarkable. Before leaving for the concert, grandmother would make it a point to spend a few minutes in silence in the prayer room and then light the lamp. Her love and devotion for the Paramacharya was extraordinary. Besides, she would also obtain the blessings of grandfather before the couple boarded the car.

Grandpa would make it a point to ensure that Ammu patti and her team of accompanists were present at concert venue at least 45 minutes before concert commencement. Punctuality was a point which the divine couple always adhered to which evoked the admiration of friends and well wishers.

A sense of apparent fear and a feeling of worry would be perceptible on her face until she stepped on the concert platform. Once the concert commenced, it would be a different patti altogether who would mesmerise the audience with her divine voice.

Ammu patti was truly a 'divine maestro'! Her never ending willingness to learn as well as her perfection in adherence to *shruti shuddham* has elevated her to the status of a 'Goddess of Learning' for all musicians to admire and emulate.



< V. Chandrasekhar

The writer is the son of Smt. Radha Vishwanathan.





A Grand Daughter-in-law Remembers...

Mala Chandrasekhar

It was a pleasant evening on December 11th, 1985, when my betrothal ceremony with Chandrasekhar took place. Until then, I never realised that I would become MSS's grand daughter-in-law.

Once in 1982, I had the good fortune of being blessed by her when I received the first prize for flute in an AIR music competition. My relationship with M. S. patti was unique, though I never addressed her as 'patti'.



M.S. with her grandson Chandrasekhar and grand daughter-in-law Mala at their wedding



Mala and Chandrasekhar

I could not digest calling her that for she was like a mother to all of us. For me, she has been my mentor apart from my own gurus (the Sikkil Sisters).

I was very scared, or rather nervous, playing the flute before her (such a test that was, soon after my betrothal function, to perform before her, Semmangudi mama and others!). But gradually, because of her kind words of encouragement, I got over the fear of making mistakes in rendering any *kriti* or raga. She used to correct me in a very subtle manner. She taught me how to align with the *shruti* and also taught me her exercises to sustain in every note (out of the 12 notes) with long *kaarvais*. How blissful it used to be! The *naadam* produced through my flute with the tambura is still fresh in my memory as I recall myself practising these techniques in the kitchen at night where the acoustics would be very vibrant. She used to emphasise on experiencing the purity of each note/swara along with the shruti.

As a human being, she was very kind, simple and humble. It was a great delight to observe Patti, Kadayannallur Venkataraman Mama and Radha amma (my mother-in-law) practising, learning new compositions and preparing for recordings. Whatever compositions she learnt, she would always write the meaning of the lyrics, be it any language, so that it enhanced the *bhava* in her renditions. She used to write notations of the same song many times till it got registered in her memory. How dedicated she was in her pursuit of professional excellence and what a perfectionist!

At the recording studio, she would frequently go for retakes until she was fully satisfied with her rendition. She had a wonderful team along with her that provided her with unstinted support in all her recordings.

I had the pleasure and privilege of preparing and serving her food - either lunch or evening tiffin depending on her practice sessions. I had the satisfaction of preparing for her whatever item she relished (*kothavaranga paruppu usili*, any dish made of bitter gourd, *vetha kuzhambu*, soft idlis and dosas). The highlight was dosa





chilli powder - thatha called it 'gun powder'! This was a must for her whenever she had dosas or idlis, with a tinge of ghee and green chilli chutney.

She enjoyed the food and relished the *sambhar* if it had a little more *pulippu* than usual. It was always a pleasure to see her eat because she had developed that too as an art. She would keep a small cup near her plate to keep the *karuveppilai*, chillies, and drumstick peels. Her aesthetic sense did not permit her to discard them in a corner of her plate or on the table (an eyesore for sure!). She enjoyed meeting people and talking to them in the hall till lunchtime. Lunch was always simple. Whatever she ate, the quantity was measured. There too, she maintained discipline. She enjoyed sharing the food with numerous friends and visitors. 'Stand idlis' (idlis as big as dosas) of Kalki Gardens fame was yet another delight in the family. She would carry food while flying in order to share it with the flight crew and others on the plane.

Whatever she did, it was done to utmost perfection, without her being aware of it. As she was extremely well organised and disciplined, she made sure on her concert day that by 2.30 p.m her saree, blouse, her sparkling '*blue jager*' diamond earrings and other accessories were laid out. After sometime, she would work on her hairdo, taking a lot of care in dressing up for the recital. She never failed to do *akaara sadhakam* before every single concert to open up her voice. She also spent a lot of time with her two tamburas to set the perfect pitch.

At this juncture, I would like to share an unforgettable experience. Once I went to drop Radha amma at patti's residence while they were getting ready to leave for a marriage reception concert (it was their custom that all of them, including the accompanists, would leave together for the venue from her house). On my arrival there, I was very moved by the beautiful sound of patti's voice and the tuning of the two tamburas - Lakshmi and Saraswati. In the drawing hall on one side, patti sat surrounded by Radha amma, Gowri and Kadayanallur mama, with the two tamburas and a shruti box, practising *akaara sadhakam* in ragam Shankarabharanam in three speeds. Oh, what *shruti shuddham* and divine vibration! Tears started rolling down my cheeks and I did not even realise that I had to go home. I could not bring myself to cut short such a wonderful and blissful experience. Finally she asked, "*Neeyum kutcherikku varayaa?*" (will you also come to the concert?). I replied that I was not properly dressed for the concert. Immediately, she asked Visalam (her personal assistant who was very dear to her) to give me a saree from her own collection that would match the blouse that I was wearing. She told me to use her make-up stuff and she made sure that I was also seated on the concert platform. To play the tambura for her while she sang was a great blessing for me. On many of those occasions, I got an opportunity to observe and understand the minute nuances, the *gamakas*, the modulation, the perfection with which she rendered any kriti or raga, her swara-singing, the sense of proportion, the dedication and perfection and the *bhakti bhava* in each song.

Patti and my mother-in-law Radha amma were inseparable. They treasured their relationship. Patti was devastated when Radha amma fell ill. When my mother-in-law's condition improved, patti would come to our house everyday with the shruti box and the notebooks around 11 a.m. They would then practise together. Kadayanallur mama would also come for the sessions to help them. I am very fortunate to have been present there listening to them and I have certainly learnt a lot. Around 2 p.m, patti would have tiffin insisting that the coffee be brought along with the eatables and not after.





Discipline and punctuality are what I have always associated with her. I have never seen her utter a harsh word to anyone. Even her criticism of my performances would be gentle in nature. Just a glance from her was enough to tell me that I had made a mistake.

A typical day for her would start with coffee and a bath followed by an elaborate pooja and singing of shlokas for almost an hour in a *madi pudavai*. She was always well groomed with sparkling teeth, clean short straight nails, and well combed hair. She even took special care to keep the soles of her feet free of cracks. Her glowing features would become more distinguished with the beautiful *kumkum* and *vibhooti* which she meticulously applied on her forehead. Patti loved the fragrance of jasmine and in those days would wear a *veni* everyday. In case jasmine was not available, her only other choice was roses with *marugu*, all threaded like a *veni* with every single flower in place.

She loved perfume, but would not spray it on herself. She preferred to sprinkle a few drops of it on her extremely clean handkerchief that she held in her hand during the concert. Soon after returning home from a *kutcheri*, she would immediately remove her special earrings and place them in their box adding a dash of perfume to it. She used only three hairpins and they would be meticulously stored away for the next use. Even in those days, she never retired to bed without brushing her teeth.

She loved silk sarees and also thick cotton sarees with border. Muthu Chettiar wove a special blue for her which became very popular as 'M. S. Blue'. She loved that colour.

Another fact is that she did not wear spectacles during her concerts. This was suggested by thatha as he felt that it could distract her attention while singing. She always sang the songs as listed by thatha. Some of her other interests were stringing flowers, drawing *kolams* with rice flour and listening to the radio. After a simple meal at night, she would relax as she listened to some music on her tiny pocket radio. According to Radha amma, both thatha and patti were fond of plants and maintained a lovely garden at Kalki Gardens. In fact, a hibiscus variety with very light pink flowers grown there was named after M. S. She loved children, dogs and other animals too. Of course, she loved all human beings. She touched millions of people with her music, her character and her abundant love.



M. S. Blue

It is indeed a strange coincidence that my close association with her began and ended on the same date - 11th December. It commenced on the day of my betrothal in 1985 and ended on the same date in December 2004 when she passed away. But her divine music will continue to be a source of perennial inspiration.



< Mala Chandrasekhar

The writer is a senior flautist and the daughter-in-law of Smt. Radha Vishwanathan.



M. S. - The Consummate Philanthropist

Shankar Ramachandran

I was born the second child of Anandhi, the daughter of Kalki Krishnamurthy and T. Sadasivam's nephew Ramachandran. The year I was born, Radha and Viswanathan had a son, Chandrasekar and later that year Vijaya and Rajendran had a daughter whom they named Seetha. Three babies born in the same year must have made for a busy household. Eventually, there were some thirteen of us cousins growing up in or around the big house on Guruswamy Mudaliar Road. What I remember most from those days are the smells and fragrances that wafted through those pillared walls. Jasmine flowers, *sambrani* (benzoin), scented *supari*, *sheekai*, *vetiver* and other traditional scents. There was always the aroma of traditional South Indian food being cooked at all times of the day.

Like all children, we had carefree days. I do remember the many musicians and dignitaries who wandered through those corridors. Our favourites were those who made time to share a kind word or two, tell a story or play a game with the children. Musiri Subramania Iyer would sing little songs for us. K. S. Narayanaswamy ('veena mama' as we all called him) would share a song or a little story. Professor Gautham enjoyed playing card games. Mrs. Devdas Gandhi would endlessly play 20 questions with us and, when we were little, she let us win without our knowing it. M. S. and Sadasivam (patti and Chinna thatha) would often take us out to wherever they were going; either with or without our parents in tow. We had many a visit to the airport to receive some political dignitary arriving from New Delhi. Innumerable are the weddings, concerts and temples that we have visited along with them. I remember my cousin Rajagopal and I hopping into the car with them on a moment's notice and heading off to Tirupathi and to Thirvaiyaru. We were perhaps 12 years old. I remember Chinna thatha leaving word with the watchman to inform our parents that we had gone with them.

But when Jayashri Suresh asked me to share some of my memories of patti, I knew exactly where to begin. It was much later in my life when patti and thatha were living in Kotturpuram. The year may have been 1995. I happened to go to Chennai for a few days. As was my practice, I visited everyone in the immediate family soon after I arrived as I wanted to try and spend as much time with them as I could.



Chinna Thatha and Patti

When I visited Chinna thatha and patti, they welcomed me enthusiastically and made sure that I would come to have lunch with them on one of the days before my return to the US. I made sure

that the day I picked was one when there wouldn't be other visitors coming. These were days when their home would see a continuous stream of visitors. One could never be sure who would be in the house when we were dropping in. It could be senior musicians or dancers from Chennai or from Calcutta, a famous movie actress, the leading scion of one of the great industrialist families of India, or the late Kadayannallur Venkataraman mama who may have come to help patti practise a new song that she was learning. Getting exclusive time with the couple was never easy. One had to be very lucky indeed to find the ageing couple enjoying some free time.



On the appointed day, I arrived mid-morning with a spring in my step. Chinna thatha welcomed me with exuberance and patti smiled happily. They were both seated on their wicker armchairs with *visiris* (palm leaf fans) in their hands. After the initial enquiries, we soon went in to eat lunch. The cook had prepared a feast that included *vadai*, *payasam* and *appalams*. The rasam at their house was always very special. I was served on a broad banana leaf and ate well. Both of them kept instructing the cook to serve me more of the dishes that had been prepared specially for me.

No one who has ever eaten at the Sadasivams need be reminded of their warm and attentive hospitality. "But all this for me?" I wondered out aloud. Patti immediately said that I should move back to Chennai and then I could eat like this with them everyday. Chinna thatha looked at me and said with a deadpan expression, "This is what everyone in the family will say to you. But only if you continue to stay in America." Only the twinkle in his eye betrayed the humour.

We finished lunch and soon settled in the drawing room to chat for a bit before thatha would need to go in for his afternoon nap. As we were talking and I was sharing the details of my life in America with them, there was a knock at the solid wooden front door. I opened it to find a family of five standing on the verandah by the wrought iron Meera frieze on the wall. There were three adults accompanied by two young girls in *pavadai* and *pinnal*. They hesitantly said that they had come from some small town or village (the name escapes me now) and had stopped to pay their respects.

Soon they came in and sat down on the floor in front of the Sadasivams. Patti made me unroll a mat, and soon a conversation ensued. It really wasn't at all clear who they were or whether they were known to the Sadasivams. Somehow none of that seemed to matter. They were offered *shukku* (dried ginger) coffee and some snacks. The older of the adults were the grandparents of the two young girls who were sitting quietly and listening to the adults talk. The third adult, I surmised, was their mother.

Thatha soon excused himself and went in but patti stayed with the visitors and listened and conversed with them with no hint of her age or fatigue showing. I sat there quietly listening and was waiting for the visitors to show some sign of readiness to leave. Eventually, after what seemed like eternity, they said that they should be going. Patti had some gifts including betel leaves and nuts and fruits brought out on a plate. She got up and fetched some blouse pieces from her room and these were ceremoniously given to the visitors. The girls were asked to do *namaskaram*.

It was well past midday now and the Chennai afternoon was at it's hottest. Patti stood up to see them off. The front door was opened to let the bright haze stream in. As I was about to roll up the mat, patti asked them softly, "*kuzhandaigal paaduvala?*" (Do the girls sing?). I groaned inwardly as everyone sat down again and the two girls were each made to sing a short *kriti* that seemed to take a long time (in my mind). They both then were asked to do *namaskaram* once again to patti and she blessed them both. She touched their heads gently and told them to practise every day.

By then, thatha had come back from his nap and we all had some *shukku* coffee together. Now poor patti had missed her chance to get some rest. Soon, it was time for me to take leave. Before I bade goodbye, I asked her, "Why did you do that,





patti? The visitors were going to leave. You could have easily gotten some rest. You didn't even know who they were. What difference did it make to you whether the two girls sang, danced or played with marbles and tops?" "It made the children happy!" came her calm reply after a momentary pause for thought.

That reply has stayed with me now for almost two decades. I remember it like it were yesterday. I even remember the cotton saree she was wearing that day. That answer is perhaps the greatest gift she has ever given me. For an elderly couple to make time and offer such hospitality to strangers would have been remarkable enough. But for M. S. Subbulakshmi to show such courtesy and bravely listen to two young girls sing and encourage them? I realised too that this was probably a scene that perhaps repeated itself endlessly in her life.

We have all heard of M. S. singing for fellow passengers on the train or at random encounters. My sister and other members of the family each have told me of many such incidents. But here it was in front of me - M. S. philanthropy at it's finest - her willingness to give of herself at every age and at every stage of her life and career. That was who she was. Perhaps we can all work at being like that. But perhaps, like her music, it is a gift with which one is born.



◀ Shankar Ramachandran

The author Shankar Ramachandran, makes his home in Columbus Ohio in the United States. He is the President of Dhvani: the India Performing Arts Society of Central Ohio and is also a correspondent for Sruti Magazine.

FORM IV

(See Rule 8 of Press & Registration of Book Act)

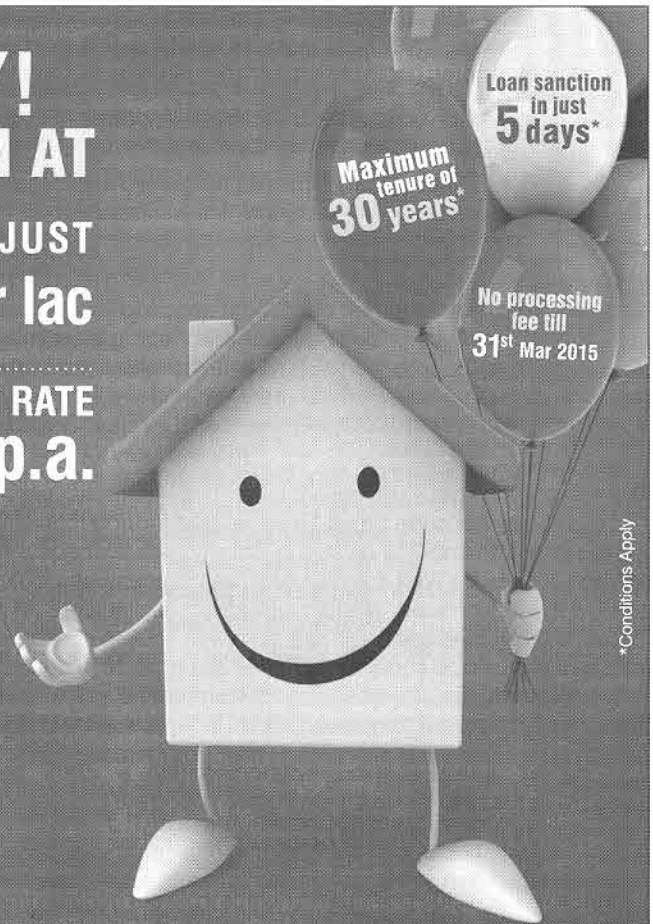
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I, Shri V. S. Amarnath Sury, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

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M. S. and Sabha

A Cherished Association

Jyothi Mohan

Bharat Ratna, Dr. M. S. Subbulakshmi, had a long association with the Sabha for over five decades. Through its highs and lows, it had a steadfast benefactor in her. Her love for our Sabha transcended the conventional association of a performing artiste with the Sabha. The Sabha felt honoured to make her an Honorary Patron in the year 2000. Several memorable concerts of hers were recorded in this Sabha.

A legend in her lifetime, M. S. Amma was a trail blazer in more ways than one. She was the first lady who was awarded the 'Sangeetha Kalanidhi' by the Madras Music Academy, the first musician to be conferred with the Ramon Magsaysay Award for her philanthropy, the first musician to be invited to perform at the UN and the first musician to be awarded the country's highest civilian award, the 'Bharat Ratna'.

Rising from a humble background, she conquered the world through her hard work and goodness of heart, remaining rooted to her values and touching the lives of all those whom she came in contact with.

The Shanmukhananda Fine Arts and Sangeetha Sabha commemorates M. S. Subbulakshmi's birthday by honouring an exemplary Guru with the Bharat Ratna Dr. M. S. Subbulakshmi Sangeetha Pracharya award. It may seem a bit incongruous to name the award after one who had taught only one student all her life, that too her own daughter. She also never lent her name to any award, but made an exception in this case. The devotion with which she sang, infusing bhakti in every note, has inspired generations of musicians. Her quest for perfection, respect for fellow artistes, concern for the rasikas and above all, her humility and service to mankind made her the manasika guru of every practitioner of this divine art form. Hence, she was the teacher of all teachers and the 'Best Teacher' award has been rightly named after her.

M. S. Amma was the perennial, humble student, seeking greater perfection in her art and searching for deeper and more enduring values in music till the end of her illustrious life. She exhorted students of music to work at acquiring purity of tone and a strict adherence to the shruti. "This is possible only if they practise voice culture assiduously. It is not enough merely to have a sweet voice; it must be cultivated to a level where it will begin to give of its best. In music, there are no short cuts. Hard work is the only way", she has said.

The Sabha therefore decided in the year 2013, to award young and promising musical talent with the Dr. M. S. Subbulakshmi Fellowship Award to perpetuate her memory.

Most of the archives of her photo collection as well as rare gems of her chamber concerts, were given to the Sabha. To express gratitude, the Sabha dedicated the auditorium on the Bharatiya premises to her memory and named it Bharat Ratna Dr. M. S. Subbulakshmi Auditorium on 27th February, 2006 in the presence of His Holiness Shri Andavan Swami.



Bharat Ratna Dr. M. S. Subbulakshmi Auditorium



In the Diamond Jubilee Year of the Sabha, on 21st September, 2013, a gallery housing rare portraits of M. S. Amma's illustrious and eventful life was inaugurated on the first floor by His Excellency Shri M. K. Narayanan, Governor of West Bengal.



Decorated for the inauguration



Photo Gallery displaying beautiful photographs

He also unveiled an eight-foot one inch high ebonite statue of M. S. Amma, for which permission was given during her lifetime, in the ground floor foyer. Thousands of people who throng the hall are able to pay their respects to M. S. Amma.



The ebonite statue of 'Bharat Ratna' M. S. Subbulakshmi

On 18th December, 2005, a commemorative postage stamp on Dr. M. S. Subbulakshmi was issued by the postal department, the first of a Carnatic musician and also the first of a female musician. In this Centenary Year Celebration, the postal department will issue a First Day Cover and special stamp to celebrate the long association of the Sabha with Bharat Ratna Dr. M. S. Subbulakshmi on 16th September, 2015.



Special Cover released on her 100th Birth Anniversary - 16th September 2015

M.S. Amma has regaled members of our Sabha with her divine music from the year 1958 when she performed in January in the Annual Music and Dance Festival of the Sabha. Subsequent performances in August of 1963, 1967 and 1969 and in October 1972 at our Sabha are remembered with great reverence by old members.







Books written on Dr. M.S. Subbulakshmi

The Sri Shanmukhananda Fine Arts and Sangeetha Sabha has a very well-equipped Sangeetha Sangrahalaya which houses audio and video recordings of concerts held over the years as well as books related to music and dance. The collections attract a wide cross-section of rasikas who take delight in hearing and seeing the vast collection that the Sangrahalaya has to offer. Since the Sabha enjoys a special connect with Bharat Ratna Dr. M.S. Subbulakshmi, most books written about M.S. Amma as well as audio CDs of hers can be found in our Sangrahalaya.


The books written on M. S. Amma found in our library are -

- 

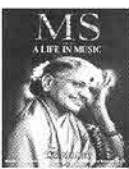
Kunjamma...Ode to a Nightingale : M. S. Subbulakshmi by Lakshmi Vishwanathan

The book deals with every aspect of M.S.'s glorious career, be it her mastery over the classical tradition or her unforgettable screen performances.
- 


MS and Radha : Saga of Steadfast Devotion by Gowri Ramnarayan

This book by M.S.'s grand-niece describes the bond of love and devotion between the mother and daughter
- 

M. S. Subbulakshmi - The Voice Divine by V. Gangadhar

This book traces the most inspiring story of one of the greatest singers whose life and music remains the greatest form of worship.
- 

M. S. : A Life in Music by T.J.S. George

This biography unravels the saga of one of India's most revered and respected musicians, whose name has become synonymous with bhakti.
- 

Pictures of Melody Series - By Lakshmi Devnath

 - M. S. Subbulakshmi - The Queen of Carnatic Music
 - M. S. Subbulakshmi - The Queen of Song (Tamil Edition)

Pictures of Melody provides insights into the lives of Carnatic music legends.

These are stories that inspire, that celebrate passion and hard work. In her very lucid style, she has presented the life of M. S. Amma in a smooth-flowing interesting narrative interspersed with attractive pictures for young readers.





List of CDs sung by M.S. Subbulakshmi :

The Sangrahalaya of the Sabha has a vast collection of recordings in the form of CDs sung by Bharat Ratna Dr. M.S. Subbulakshmi. The following list of Cds are available for the listener:



1. Tirupati Lord Balaji Complete Collection-A set of 7 Cds
2. Immortal Legends Milestone Collection
3. Hari Tum Haro Meera Bhajans
4. Meera Bhajans Hindi Devotional
5. Bhajan Shree Hindi Devotional
6. Surdas Bhajans
7. Main Nahi Makhan Khayo Bhajan
8. Bhaja Govindam Vishnu Sahasranamam
9. Lakshmi Kataksham Vocal
10. Tamil Film Songs
11. Bharati Film Songs
12. Unheard M.S.
13. Kalki Ponvizha Isai Kadambam
14. Anubhuti The "MS" Experience (Live at Rasika Ranjani Sabha ,Madras 1960)
15. The Magic of MS (Live at Ramakrishna Mission,Jaffna Ceylon,1953)
16. Swara Ganga Volume I
17. Swara Ganga Volume II
18. Paddhatti (Live in Concert-1956) at Music Academy Madras
19. Paddhatti (Live in Concert-1960) at Music Academy Madras
20. Paddhatti (Live in Concert-1966) at Music Academy Madras
21. Paddhatti (Live in Concert-1977) at Detroit, U.S.A.
22. Paddhatti (Live in Concert-1971 I) at Brahma Gana Sabha Madras
23. Paddhatti (Live in Concert-1971 II) at Mylapore Fine Arts Madras
24. Paddhatti (Live in Concert-1956 II) at Bhavani, Erode
25. Masterworks from the NCPA Archives-August 1978



< Jyothi Mohan

Jyothi Mohan is a Bharatanatyam Guru and a faculty member of the vidyalaya.

Sri Shanmukhananda Bharat Ratna Dr. M. S. Subbulakshmi Sangeetha Pracharya Awardees

The Shanmukhananda Fine Arts and Sangeetha Sabha commemorates M. S. Subbulakshmi's birthday by honouring an exemplary teacher with the Bharat Ratna Dr. M. S. Subbulakshmi Sangeetha Pracharya Award. This award is given to those musicians and dancers who have dedicated their lives to the cause of teaching their art selflessly. Previously, it was given only to Gurus from Mumbai and was called the Best Teacher Award. From the year 2011, the geographical coverage of the award was extended outside the metropolis of Mumbai, to recognise the outstanding contribution made by eminent teachers at the National level and got a new name, The Sangeetha Pracharya Award. It carries a citation, a cash prize of rupees one lakh, a beautiful brass lamp and a shawl.

2003



Smt. T. R. Balamani

Smt. T. R. Balamani had her initial training from late Shri Tripunithurai Narayana Bhagavathar. The Central College of Carnatic Music, Chennai groomed her. She continued her advanced training with Government of India Research Scholarship. A mellifluous voice, lovely gamakas, insight into the subtle aspects of the art that she possessed were factors that certainly would have placed her in the league of the most eminent vocalists, but she used them all in teaching. She was in the faculty of Bharatiya Music and Arts Society for a decade till 1975. She was one of the very few teachers teaching rare varnams, neraval and pallavi. The exquisite class of the guru was amply evident in several of her students who today have emerged as the leading lights of Carnatic Music.

2004



Kalaimamani Guru
K. Kalyanasundaram

Guru Kalyanasundaram hails from a family of Nattuvanar Parampara, traditional dance teachers, now in its eighth generation. Born on 1st March, 1932, he imbibed the art from his father Guru Kuppiyah Pillai, his brother Guru Mahalingam Pillai, his brother-in-law Guru Govindraj Pillai and sister Smt. Karunambal. As Director of the Sri Raja Rajeshwari Bharata Natya Kala Mandir, he is the torch bearer of the Tanjore tradition of Bharata Natyam. His dance dramas are well received for their rich tapestry of choreography, music and literature. Notable amongst his Dance dramas is the internationally acclaimed 'Vasanthavalli Tirukkutrala Kuravanji'. For his exemplary devotion to teaching this art to generations of students, he was honoured with national and state level titles.



Shri. N. S.
Chandrasekharan

Guru Shri. N. S. Chandrasekharan, grand nephew of Kanjira Maestro Pudukkottai Shri Dakshinamurthy Pillai was born in Chennai on 21st October 1925. He underwent initial training in Carnatic Music from Nadaswara Vidwan Manuswamy Pandit and later from Smt. Dhanakoti Kupammal and the legendary Alathur Brothers. After a stint as a performing artiste in AIR and Sangeetha Sabhas in Chennai for over 4 decades, he set his feet in Mumbai with promotion of Music as his prime goal. He founded Naadha Anjali, an academy to encourage promising local artistes and also conduct Carnatic Music classes. The dedication of the Guru is amply evident in several of his students who have made a mark in the field of music.



Guru Smt. Rajee
Narayan

Guru Smt. Rajee Narayan, was born on 19th August, 1931 in Chennai. She hails from a family of musicians. Her Bharatanatyam Arangetram was done when she was just 9 years old and her first solo public performance of vocal Carnatic music was at the age of 14. At 15, she started learning Carnatic music from Sangeetha Vidwan Shri. Thuraiyoor M. Rajagopala Sarma and the famous music director, Shri. C. R. Subbaraman. From 1952, she became a popular voice over AIR, Trichi station. In 1959, she acquired a diploma in the higher grade Government Technical Music Examination. She relocated to Mumbai and started Nritya Geethanjali in 1965. This popular dance school has turned out several students who have been guided and shaped to perfection in this art by her. One of the few woman vaggayakaras of our times, she has composed and set to music several lyrics penned by her in Telugu, Tamil, Hindi and Sanskrit. Her creations include Nritya Geeta Mala (two volumes), Natya Sastra Mala, Sangeeta Sastra Mala and Rural Rhythms.

In 1986, she was honoured by Madhuban and the Madhya Pradesh Government with the title, Shreshta Kala Acharya. In 1998, the Government of Maharashtra bestowed on her, the Lifetime Achievement Award, Rajya Sanskritik Puraskar for Dance.



Shri T. S. Nandakumar

Vidwan Shri Nandakumar, an A Grade artist of the All India Radio, hails from a family of renowned Nadaswaram exponents, Ambalapuzha Brothers of Kerala. He underwent training in percussion under Shri Kaithavana Madhavdas in the Gurukulam tradition.

For over quarter of a century now, Shri Nandakumar has performed and conducted workshops on various platforms within the country and abroad. Shri Nandakumar has been training students in Mrudangam, Ghatam, Kanjira, Morsing and in Konnakkol. He has many albums to his credit. His album Jewels of Rhythm is considered a must for all aspirants, young and old, learning the art of percussion.

Shri Nandakumar established TSN's Percussive Art Centre to impart specialized training to students in percussion instruments.





2008



**Ganabhooshanam
Shri P. Vaidyanatha
Bhagavathar**

Ganabhooshanam Shri. P. Vaidyanatha Bhagavathar was born on 16th December, 1921 in Kollam Dist. Kerala State. He had his initial training in music from Vidwan Vaikom Krishna Iyer and later from Shri. Neelakanda Bhagavathar, nephew of Shri. Muthiah Bhagavathar (Asthana Vidwan of Travancore state). Shri. Vaidyanatha Bhagavathar made his debut at the tender age of 13 at the Vaikom Shiva Temple. He was among the first students at the Swati Tirunal Academy of Trivandrum. Later, he was under the guidance of Dr. Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer. At the age of 20, he was awarded the title of Ganabhooshanam.

Shri. Vaidyanatha Bhagavathar won several laurels, prizes and awards, notable among them being Young Performer Gold Medal of the Madras Music Academy. He travelled widely across Western Europe, North and South America for close to a year and was nicknamed as London Vaidyanatha Bhagavathar.

He teaches, motivates and inspires and numerous are his students who recall his zeal, patience and untiring effort to bring out the best in them and many students have become performers / teachers in their own right.

2009



**Vidwan Palakkad
Shri. T. S. Anantharaman**

Shri Anantharaman was born in a very orthodox and musical family in Palakkad. His grandfather was the renowned Palakkad Shri Anantharama Bhagavathar, a stalwart in Carnatic music. Shri Anantharaman started training in Carnatic music from the age of 5 under his aunt Smt. Mangalam, who was the direct disciple of Palakkad Shri Anantharama Bhagavathar. His tutelage continued under Shri Appukuttan Varar, a disciple of Chembai Vaidyanatha Bhagavathar. Apart from vocal music, he learnt to play the harmonium and accompanied many doyens. He also learnt to play the mrudangam under the veteran Palghat Shri. R. Raghu.

After moving to Mumbai, he gave his first vocal concert in 1962 at Thyagaraja Aradhana festival and thereafter appeared for the AIR audition and got the gradation. He continued to learn under Trichy Shri Swaminatha Iyer and in 1985, he established a music school in Chembur, Mumbai. He prepares and sends students for Junior and Senior examinations of the Karnataka Government Music Examinations held at Bangalore. More than 80 of his students have passed Junior/Senior level exams with flying colours. He has presented his students in specially composed thematic concerts which have won acclaim. In 1992, His Holiness Shri Bharathi Teertha Swamiji of Sringeri bestowed upon Shri Anantharaman the title of Asthana Vidwan of Sringeri Shri Sharada Peetham. He has been honoured with several titles like Sangeetha Choodamani from Padam, Mumbai, Naada Vibhushanam from Nadoposana, Mumbai, among others.





2010



Dr. Kanak Rele

Kanak Rele is today one of the most distinguished dancer-scholars of India. The President of India has honoured her as "A pioneering dance educationist and top most Mohini Attam exponent". For the past 40 years, she has ceaselessly strived to rejuvenate the classical dance art Mohini Attam of Kerala. Today her name is synonymous with Mohini Attam. A highly acclaimed exponent, she has performed singly and with her troupe all over India as well as in many parts of the world. She is a qualified lawyer who has done research in International Law at the University of Manchester U.K. Her Ph.D. at the Faculty of Fine Arts University of Mumbai was on Mohini Attam.

Trained initially from a very young age in another Kerala art Kathakali under late Guru "Panchali" Karunakara Panikkar, who is regarded as one of the greats for '*stree-vesham*' in Kathakali, Kanak has won high acclaim for her rendition of Kathakali as well.

She is equally recognized for her pioneering work in two fields - that of re-establishing the exquisitely lyrical dance Mohini Attam and for introducing new and richer dimensions to the field of academics and research in classical dancing.

Today Kanak Rele is recognized as an outstanding teacher and dance scholar. She has trained a generation of brilliant students who are now winning acclaim for their chaste and intense performance. She is the only dance expert on the Curriculum Development Committee of U.G.C. She has been invited by many universities / institutions to formulate their courses of study.

2011



Padma Bhushan
Shri. P. S.
Narayanaswamy

Shri. P. S. Narayanaswamy, popularly known as 'Pitchai' or 'PSN' to his friends and admirers, is an eminent artiste of high caliber with over six decades in the field of Carnatic music both as a performer and teacher. One of the leading torch bearers of the great Semmangudi Bani, he created waves in his prime days as a performer of astounding merit. He has also been instrumental in creating a strong line of disciples to carry forward this great classical music to the future generation.

Born on 24th February, 1934, at Konerirajapuram, to Dr. P. N. Subramaniam, a medical practitioner, Narayanaswamy exhibited his talent in music at a very tender age and his parents put him under Thirupampuram Somasundaram Pillai, a Nagaswaram Vidwan, for his music lessons. Narayanaswamy made rapid progress and later came under Mudikondan Venkatarama Iyer, and then under Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer. Under the gurukulavasa system, he joined Semmangudi in early 1950s. Narayanaswamy had started giving concerts, both public and through All India Radio, at the age of 15. Narayanaswamy has had an illustrious career as a performer for many years, having been accompanied by all the stalwarts in the field.





Narayanaswamy has earned a special place for himself among the art fraternity because of his simple and unassuming nature. In today's context, where youngsters feel on top of the world just on achieving a few milestones, Narayanaswamy is an example of a person who though brimming with outstanding vidwat and caliber has remained calm and composed, always keeping 'his head on his shoulders'.

An epitome of humility, Narayanaswamy is one of the rare musicians who has never craved publicity and has preferred to do things unassumingly. It is indeed hard to find Gurus like him in this commercial world - a Guru who teaches selflessly, sharing his wealth of knowledge with the students in an unrestricted manner. You would never find Narayanaswamy taking classes by the hour as most teachers do today. Sometimes, losing track of time, classes would keep going on and on till the song was perfected.

2012



Adyar Shri. K. Lakshman

Adyar Shri. K. Lakshman born on 16th December, 1933, in Kuppam in Chittoor District of Andhra Pradesh to Shri. Krishna Raja Rao and Smt. Godavari Bai. He was scouted at a very early age by Shri P. D. Doraiswamy Iyer, representative of Kalakshetra (founded by Smt. Rukmani Devi Arundale) and admitted there because of his unusual rhythmic and musical talents.

Acclaimed as an International Bharathanatyam Guru, because of his frequent trips abroad on invitations both for performances and lecture demonstrations, Shri K. Lakshman, after serving in Kalakshetra taught at the dance school 'Natyalaya' for 10 years where he conducted a number of Arangetrams and assisted in choreographing many dance dramas such as 'Thiruppavai', 'Azhagar Kuravanji', 'Chandalika', and 'Sanga Tamizh Malai'.

Establishing his centre for Dance known as 'Bharatha Choodamani' on 22nd August, 1969, Shri. Adyar K. Lakshman trained many students in the institution not only in Bharathanatyam but also in vocal and other instruments who are making a mark for themselves all over the world.

Shri Adyar K. Lakshman has to his credit numerous awards and titles, notable amongst them are 'Padmashri' from the Government of India, 'Kalaimamani' from the Government of Tamilnadu, and 'Sangeet Natak Academi' Award.





2013



Neyveli Shri. R. Santhanagopalan

Neyveli Santhanagopalan is an internationally acclaimed senior Carnatic musician who is known for concerts that are marked with traditional classicism. The greatness of this musician lives beyond the image he portrays. His excellent theoretical depth with extensive research of the best approaches makes him a distinctive musicologist. Isai Peroli, Shri Neyveli Santhanagopalan is an 'A' grade artiste in both All India Radio and Doordarshan and is the recipient of several laurels, titles, and awards from leading music associations in India and overseas. His several successful projects to enrich, enthuse and elevate rasikas with his music stand testimony to his commitment to spread the message of music. Through his famous programmes in JAYA TV Neyveli Santhanagopalan has become a household name conquering hearts of his innumerable rasikas and hundreds of students. His innovative projects such as Charangi's Introducing Ragas through Pallavis have not only inspired budding musicians but also educated rasikas alike. Shri. Santhanagopalan is a brilliant vaggeyakaara (composer). His kritis such as *Kamala Malarinai* (Hamsadhwani), *Nin Pada Bhajaname* (Malayamarutham), *Enna Solli Vaazhthuvemo* (Dhanyasi) are rich in poetic beauty, ragabhavam and subtle swaraksharas.

His keen focus in balancing music as a classical science and a performing art has impacted students' musical personal growth. In time, this impact and the interactive dynamic has blossomed into the Neyveli Gurukulam - a global musical family. With several of his students bearing the torch he has lit with his passion, unconditional love and staunch learning standards, Shri. Santhanagopalan is more than a guru. Hundreds of his students worldwide have benefited from his remote lessons over phone and Skype, his e-learning modules from NSG Net Learning Program and his lessons delivered through recordings.

2014



Smt. Suguna Vardachari









Smt. Suguna Varadachari, an eminent Carnatic musician is a store house of knowledge. She stands for all that is traditional, classical and chaste in music. She trained under the legendary Musiri Subramaniya Iyer, who nourished her with the very subtle nuances of classicism and aesthetics in music and later from Calcutta Krishnamurthy, a distinguished musician, composer and a teacher par excellence. Smt. Vardachari served in the Department of Music, University of Madras for 20 years. An 'A' Grade artist of the All India Radio, she has carved a niche for herself for her uncompromising adherence to tradition. She is highly adept in unravelling the intricacies of a composition to students and her rendition of any aspect of music is lucid and paedagogic.



M. S. Fellowship Awardees

The M. S. Fellowship Award was instituted in the year 2013 by The Shanmukhananda Fine Arts and Sangeetha Sabha to award young and promising musical talent with the Dr. M. S. Subbulakshmi Fellowship Award to perpetuate her memory. The fellowship is for a tenure of 3 years and is renewed each year at the discretion of the Sabha based on recommendations of the nomination panel appointed for it. It carries a grant of rupees one lakh per annum. To mark the centenary year of M. S. Subbulakshmi, fifty Fellowship awards are being conferred upon deserving young artistes this year.

Fellowship Awardees for Dr. M. S. Subbulakshmi Fellowship Award in Music for 2015-16

Sr. No.	Photo	Name & Address	DOB	Category	Disciple of	
1.		Shri. R. Raghul Chennai M.Sc. (Mathematics) M.A. (Music)	21.12.1986	Violin	Shri. P. Govindarajan Dr. M. Chandrasekhar Smt. Vasantha Kannan	AIR 'A' Grade Artiste
2.		Ms. Pooja Suresh Chennai B.Com. (Marketing & Mgmt) M. A. (Broadcast Communication)	13.04.1991	Veena	Shri. P.Vasanth Kumar Smt. Sangeetha Sivakumar	No grade as such
3.		Shri. Balamuralikrishna M. Chennai M.Com. M.A. (Music)	30.06.1985	Vocal	Shri. P.S. Narayanaswamy Neyveli Santhanagopalan R. Meenakshi Sundaram	AIR 'A' Grade Artiste
4.		Shri. Sunil R. Gargyan Chennai B.Com.	09.05.1995	Vocal	Shri. P.S. Narayanaswamy Nagai Shri. S. Bhashyam Shri. P.B. Rangachari	'B' High Grade Artiste of All India Radio. CCRT Junior Scholarship from 2005.
5.		Ms. Deekshita Venkatraman Chennai B.Com. M.A. (Music)	28.01.1992	Vocal	Prof. T. R. Subramaniam Smt. Raji Gopalakrishnan	'B' High Grade Artiste of All India Radio
6.		Ms. N. J. Nandini Trivandrum B.Com.	05.08.1991	Vocal	Prof. Parassala Ponnammal Prof. P. R. Kumarakerala Varma Dr. S. Bhagyalakshmi Dr. M. N. Moorthy	'A' grade Artiste of All India Radio. CCRT Scholarship
7.		Shri. Ashwath Narayanan Chennai B. Tech	04.07.1991	Vocal	Palghat K. V. Narayanaswamy Smt. Padma Narayanaswamy	'B+' grade artiste of All India Radio and is a recipient of CCRT Scholarship
8.		Ms. Brindha Manickavasakan Chennai B. Tech. MS (Bio-statistics)-George Town University, Washington DC MA (Music)	21.11.1989	Vocal	Smt. Suguna Varadhachari	'B High" grade artiste of All India Radio.



Sr. No.	Photo	Name & Address	DOB	Category	Disciple of	
9.		Smt. Kalpalathka Ravishankar Chennai MA, B.Ed., MA (Music)	05.08.1989	Vocal	Dr. Prema Rangarajan Smt. Shakuntala Seshadri Smt. S. Sowmya	'B High' grade artist of All India Radio.
10.		Shri. N. C. Bharadwaj Chennai B. Com.	02.04.1992	Mrudangam	Dr. Umayalapuram K. Sivaraman Nanganallur R. Sriram Srinanchayam S. Gopalan	"B High" artist of All India Radio and recipient of CCRT Scholarship.
11.		Shri N. R. Kannan Shri. N. R. Anand Nemmara Brothers Palakkad, Kerala SSLC HSC	20.05.1985 31.05.1992	Nadaswaram	Shri. Kanjappan Pillai Shri. Sakthivel	Recipient of Shanmukha Sangeetha Shironmani Award in 2012
12.		Kum. Dharini Veeraraghavan Mumbai F.Y. B.Com	14.01.1998	Carnatic Vocal	Smt. Radha Namboodiri	CCRT Scholarship* in 2009.
13.		Ms. Vasudha Ravi Chennai MBA B.Sc. (Nutrition) MA (Music)	11.08.1985	Vocal	Dr. Manjula Sriram	Grade 'A' artist of All India Radio.
14.		Ms. J. K. Yogakirtana Bengaluru MBA	24.09.1990	Vocal	Smt. Neela Ramgopal Smt. P. Ramaa	'B' grade Artist of All India Radio and recipient of CCRT Scholarship.
15.		Shri. Vivek Sadasivam Bengaluru B.Tech	31.01.1990	Vocal	Rudrapatnam Shri Tyagarajan	'B' High grade artist of AIR
16.		Shri. S. R. Vinay Sharva Bengaluru B.E. M.E. (Digital Signal Processing)	08.10.1988	Vocal	Dr. Nedunuri Krishnamurthy Shri. S. Shankar	'A' grade artist of All India Radio.
17.		Ms. Aishwarya Madhavan Trichy B.Com	02.02.1992	Vocal	Smt Ambujam Vedantam Injikkudi Shri. E. P. Ganesan	'B+' high grade artist of AIR
18.		Shri. Vivek P. Moozhikulam Ernakulam M.A. (Music)	14.01.1988	Vocal	Shri. C. R. Vaidyanathan V. R. Dileep Kumar Raju Narayanan	CCRT Scholarship from the Govt. of India since 2012.
19.		Ms. K. P. Nandini Chennai B.Sc. (Psychology)	06..12.1990	Violin	Smt Uma Prabhakar (Mayavaram Sisters)	'A' Grade Artist of All India Radio for vocal and violin. CCRT scholarship from the Government of India since 2004.





Sr. No.	Photo	Name & Address	DOB	Category	Disciple of	
20.		Shri. K. J. Dileep Chennai M. (Music)	15.6.1991	Violin	Shri. M. S. Gopala krishnan	Grade 'B' artiste of AIR, Chennai.
21.		Shri. J. B. Sruti Sagar Chennai B.E. (Mechanical) M. Music	9.12.1988	Flute	Dr. S. Sunder	'B' High Grade artiste of AIR and recipient of CCRT Scholarship.
22.		Shri. K. Praveen Kumar Chennai B.E.	31.5.1992	Mrudangam	Shri Guruvayur Dorai	'B' Grade Artiste of All India Radio
23.		Shri. K. H. Vineet Chennai B.Com. MA (Rhythmology)	25.09.1988	Mrudangam	Palakkad Shri. Mahesh Kumar Patri Satish Kumar	'B' Grade Artiste of All India Radio, Chennai. CCRT Scholarship from 2011
24.		Shri. V. Sai Subramanyan Chennai ACA	09.11.1992	Morsing	Shri. A. S. Krishnan	'B+' High grade artiste of AIR.
25.		Shri. S. Akash Bengaluru F.Y.B.Com	13.03.1997	Flute - Hindustani	Shri. Jayteerth Mevundi Pandit Ronu Majumdar	Shanmukha Sangeetha Shiromani Award from our Sabha in 2011.
26.		Master Viraj Joshi Pune Std. VI	10.3.2003	Vocal - Hindustani	Shrinivas Joshi	Grandson of Bharat Ratna Pandit Bhimsen Joshi
27.		Shri. Kaustubh Padmakar More Mumbai XIIIth Standard	18.9.1998 Studying in XIIIth std.	Vocal - Hindustani	Pt. Sudhindra Bhaumik	
28.		Shri. Kalyanapuram S. Aravind Chennai	2.5.1989	Carnatic Vocal	Madurai Shri T. N. Seshagopalan Shri S Kasthuri Rangan	'A' grade artiste of All India Radio.
29.		Ms. Keerthana Vaidyanathan Chennai BBA	8.12.1990	Carnatic Vocal	Bombay Jayashri Ramnath	'B' grade artiste of AIR.
30.		Ms. S. Hiranmayee (alias Vibha Srinidhi) Chennai B. Com Advanced Diploma in Carnatic Music	11.9.1990	Carnatic Vocal	Smt. R. Tara Dr. R. N. Shreelatha	'B' grade artiste of AIR.



Sr. No.	Photo	Name & Address	DOB	Category	Disciple of	
31.		Shri. Sumesh Narayanan Chennai B.Com.	20.5.1992	Mridangam	Shri. Thiruvaarur Bakthavathsalam	'B' High Grade Artiste of All India Radio, Chennai, Centre for Cultural Resources and Training (CCRT) Scholarship from Govt. Of India, New Delhi, since 2002.
32.		Shri. J. A. Jayanth Chennai B. E. (Electronics & Instrumentation)	8.1.1992	Flute	Late shri. T. S. Sankaran	'A' grade by All India Radio, Doordarshan.
33.		Shri. K. R. Harikrishnan Ernakulam, Kerala B.Com.	29.1.1991	Carnatic Vocal	Kalanoor Viswanathan A. D. Reju Narayanan V. R. Dileepkumar C. R. Vaidyanathan	'B' grade * artiste of AIR, recipient of CCRT Scholarship for 2 years.
34.		Shri. Krishna Sairam Chennai B.Com.	27.5.1993	Ghatam	Shri. S. Karthick Shri. V. Suresh	'B' High grade artiste of AIR.
35.		Shri. Rohit Prasad Mumbai Pursuing M.Com	16.8.1988	Mrudangam	T. S. Nandakumar	B+ high artiste of AIR. Received the Shanmukha Sangeetha Mani from Sri. Shanmukha- nanda Sabha in 2006.
36.		Shri. V. S. Gokul Mallapuram, Kerala 9th Std.	24.9.2000	Violin	Ms. A. Kanyakumari Shri. Surendran Alankode Shri. Edapally Ajith Kumar	No Grade
37.		Shri. Ramakant Gaikwad Pune	13.5.1988	Vocal - Hindustani	Shri. Suryakant Gaikwad Smt. Sangita Gaikwad	Sri. Shanmu- khananda Sangeetha Shironmani Awardee in 2013. B+ High grade AIR artiste
38.		Ms. H. M. Smitha Bengaluru M.Com.	11.11.1990	Violin	Shri. H. K. Narasimha Murthy Smt. H. N. Rajalakshmi (vocal)	'A' grade artiste of Bengaluru Akashwani. CCRT Scholarship since 2004.
39.		Shri. B. Vittala Rangan Bengaluru B.Com. doing CA	11.4.1994	Violin	Ms. A. Kanyakumari	'B' High Grade Artiste of All India Radio. Recipient of CCRT scholarship.

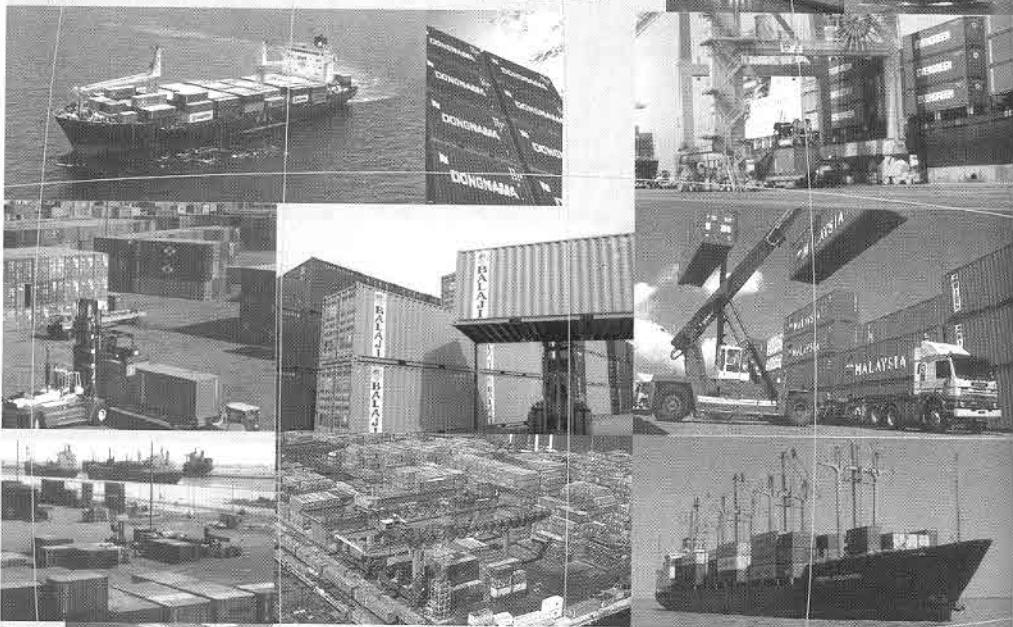




Sr. No.	Photo	Name & Address	DOB	Category	Disciple of	
40.		Shri. S. Sunil Kumar Chennai B.E. (Mechanical Engineering)	18.5.1990	Kanjira	Shri. V. Selvaganesh	'A' grade artist of All India Radio.
41.		Shri. Vishwesh Swaminathan Palakkad, Kerala Std. XII	20.9.1996	Violin	Shri. R. Swaminathan Smt. Rajeswari Swaminathan	CCRT Junior Scholarship for Carnatic Vocal from 2008. Applied for Grade.
42.		Shri. Srirangam Venkatanagarajan Chennai Doing Ph.D	25.12.1989	Carnatic Vocal	Smt. Ambujam Vedantham	Grade 'B' artist of All India Radio, Chennai
43.		Ms. B. Laxmi Surya Teja Vishakapatnam BBM, PGDA Master in Music (pursuing)	7.5.1989	Carnatic Vocal	Dr. Pantula Rama Susheela Venkata Rao	B+ High Grade artist of AIR. Recipient of CCRT Scholarship.
44.		Shri. V. S. Raghavan Chennai BCA, PG Diploma in Music	7.9.1988	Mridangam	Patri Satish Kumar Shri. Anantha Rao Shri. Kumbakonam V. Rajappa	B High Grade artist of All India Radio
45.		Shri. Varad Narendra Bhoale Kolhapur XI (Commerce)	15.11.1997	Sitar	Pandit Arvind Parikh	
46.		Shri. Sriram Mahadevan Trivandrum, Kerala XII	27.08.1997	Veena	Smt. N. Lalitha	'B' Grade Artist of All India Radio for Veena & Vocal.
47.		Ms. S. J. Jananiy Cuddalore B. A. Economics, M.A. (Music) pursuing M.Phil (Music)	10.12.1991	Carnatic Vocal / Keyboard, Western Classical, Hindustani Classical	Dr. Balamurali Krishna Shri Neyveli Santhanagopalan Shri Injikudi Ganesan & Guru Smt. Rukmani Ramani Shri Kuldeep Sagar	B High Grade Artist of All India Radio. National Award in classical music (vocal), 2001
48.		Shri. Bharat K. Sundar Chennai B.com, CA (Inter) Pursuing MA (Music)	30.8.1988	Carnatic Vocal	Shri. P. S. Narayanawamy	B High Grade Artist of All India Radio.
49.		Ms. Suchitra Balasubramanian B.Com. (Topper) M.A (Music) with Distinction M.B.A (HR)	26.4.1989	Carnatic Vocalist and Harikatha Exponent	Smt. Sudha Seshagopalan Madurai Shri. T. N. Seshagopalan Smt. Padma Sandilyan and Shri. Srimushnam V. Raja Rao	B High Grade Artist of All India Radio.
50.		Shri. Parur M. A. Ananthkrishnan	23.2.1990	Violinist	Parur Anantharaman	

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M. S. and Charity

M. S. Subbulakshmi is known far and wide for the causes she has helped through her benefit performances. A great humanitarian, she has used her voice for the promotion of all noble causes across the country. The institutions benefitted by her concerts are :



Date	Place	Cause
1936	Bombay	South Indian Education Society
30.7.1944	Madras	Kasturba Memorial Fund
25.8.1944	Tiruchirapalli	Kasturba Memorial Fund
1.9.1944	Madura	Kasturba Memorial Fund
4.9.1944	Coimbatore	Kasturba Memorial Fund
24.9.1944	Tanjore	Kasturba Memorial Fund
5.5.1945	Bombay	South Indian Education Society
28.7.1945	Madura	Madura College
17.2.1946	Nagpur	Madras Girls High School
27.4.1946	Bombay	Tyagaraja Centenary
29.5.1946	Jaffna	Lady Ramanathan College
31.5.1946	Colombo	P. Ramanathan's College
13.6.1946	Kallidaikurichi	Tilak Vidyalay
5.7.1946	Pollachi	Municipal High School
20.10.1946	Tiruchirapalli	National College
30.3.1947	Poona	Saraswati Vidyalay
3.8.1947	Madras	Sri Kapaleeswarar Temple
14.12.1947	Bombay	South Indian Education Society
7.3.1948	Mangalore	Suratkal Vidyalaya
12.3.1948	Theni Nadar	Saraswati High School
9.5.1948	Ootacamund	Kottagiri High School
26.6.1948	Lalgudi	Lalgudi Girls High School
24.7.1948	Madras	Provincial Welfare Fund
5.12.1948	Madras	National Girls High School
12.12.1948	Calicut	Zamorin's College
19.1.1949	Coimbatore	Purandaradasar Sangitha Vidyalaya
20.3.1949	Nagpur	Central College for Women
27.3.1949	New	Delhi Madrasi Education Association
30.4.1949	Bombay	Mahatma Gandhi Memorial Fund
21.8.1949	Kumbhakonam	Madras Institute of Technology
6.11.1949	Madras	Journalists Federation
11.12.1949	Salem	Anandashram of Swami Ramdass
21.1.1950	Ambur	Hindu High School
31.1.1950	Madras	Gandhi Mandapam, Guindy
19.3.1950	Coimbatore	Kasturba Trust Maternity Hospital
26.3.1950	Kanchipuram	Sri Somasundara Kamyia Vidyalaya
2.4.1950	Nellore	Kasturi Devi Vidyalaya



Date	Place	Cause
8.10.1950	Lucknow	Sapru Memorial Fund
12.10.1950	Bombay	Women's Conference
23.4.1951	Cannanore	Pariyeran Sanatorium
20.5.1951	Virudunagar	Sennaiappa Nadar Building Fund
6.4.1952	Tanjore	Gandhi Memorial T. N. Sanatorium
29.9.1953	Vellore	Sevoor T. N. Sanatorium Fund
29.11.1953	New Delhi	Sri. Ramakrishna Mission
9.12.1953	Bombay	Dr. Bharucha Memorial Fund
Sept 1954	Trichy	Seshasayee Institute of Technology
6.3.1955	Poona	Saraswati Vidyalyaya
5.12.1955	Madras	Madras Music Academy Building Fund
30.10.1955	Calcutta	Rasika Ranjana Sabha (Calcutta) Building Fund
4.11.1955	New Delhi	Kamala Nehru Memorial Hospital
22.11.1955	Jabalpur	New Education Society
15.4.1956	Bombay	Bombay Tamil Sangham
5.2.1957	Calcutta	Rasika Ranjana Sabha Building Fund
21.12.1957	Colombo	Ramakrishna Mission Building Fund
25.12.1957	Jaffna	Ramakrishna Mission Building Fund
28.12.1957	Colombo	Ramakrishna Mission Building Fund
2.4.1958	Ahmedabad	Jyoti Sangam
13.4.1958	Bangalore	Gokhale Institute
1.6.1958	Trichy	Tirupparaihurai Sri Ramakrishna Kudil
20.9.1958	Madras	Mylapur Rasika Ranjana Sabha
2.10.1958	Coimbatore	PS.G. Recreation Club
21.5.1959	Bombay	Sri. Ramakrishna Mission
5.4.1959	Delhi	Madras School
23.8.1959	Delhi	Kashmir Flood Relief Fund
20.9.1959	Bangalore	Bangalore Gayana Samaj
27.9.1959	Kanchipuram	Damal High School
25.10.1959	Madras	Teynampet Temple Renovation
8.11.1959	Bombay	South Indian School
14.2.1960	Bombay	PE.N. (A portion was paid for the purchase of Tyagaraja's house at Tiruvarur)
11.9.1960	Madras	Parthasarathi swamy Temple
14.10.1960	Mysore	Makalakoota Building Fund
29.10.1960	Bombay	Sri. Ramakrishna Mission
30.10.1960	Bombay	Athirudra Mahayagnam in Talaikaveri
7.12.1960	Bombay	Commerce College, Udipi
20.3.1961	Jamshedpur	Dakshina Bharata Mahila Funds
17.9.1961	Delhi	Kalakshetra Benefit Fund
19.10.1961	Bangalore	Udipi Choultry
11.3.1962	Madras	Book Industry Council





Date	Place	Cause
31.3.1962	Bangalore	Madar Sangam
4.11.1962	Delhi	Lions Club Vidya Mandir
8.11.1962	Delhi	National Defence Fund
29.1.1964	Palghat	Lions Club Nursery School Palghat
22.3.1964	Delhi	Madras School
2.10.1964	Calicut	Gandhi Gramam
4.10.1964	Bombay	Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan
22.11.1964	Madras	Tyagaraja Sangita Samajam, Mylapur
14.3.1965	Coimbatore	Music Academy Madras
13.8.1965	Bombay	Air India Staff Welfare Fund
4.9.1965	Madras	Balasubramania Temple Renovation
28.11.1965	Delhi	National Defence Fund
6.2.1966	Bombay	B. J. Home for Children
6.3.1966	Trichy	Jamal Mohammad College
12.3.1966	Madras	Vidyodaya School
26.3.1966	Bombay	Indian National Society for the Deaf
3.4.1966	Madras	Shuddhadwaita Vaishnava School
8.4.1966	Hyderabad	Admar Mutt Education Council
4.6.1966	Calcutta	Laxminarain Trust Maternity Home
4.3.1967	Hyderabad	PM's Bihar Drought Relief Fund
15.3.1967	Calcutta	PM's Bihar Drought Relief Fund
15.4.1967	Calcutta	Ramakrishna Mission Ashram
21.5.1967	Delhi	Bharatiya Kala Kendra
7.7.1967	Trichy	BHEL Staff Benefit Fund
10.7.1967	Bangalore	Gayana Samaja
28.10.1967	Bangalore	America - India Dispensary
12.11.1967	Delhi	Sri Venkateswara Mandir
1.12.1967	Bombay	Ma Anandmayi Seva Hospital
4.2.1968	Coimbatore	Avinashalingam Home Science College for Women
10.2.1968	Bangalore	Sri Sarada Sevika Mandali
24.2.1968	Calcutta	South Indian Association
28.2.1968	Kharagpur	Tamil Primary School
10.3.1968	Madras	Tyagaraja Sangita Vidwat Samajam
24.4.1968	Shimoga	Childrens Education Society
14.6.1968	Mysore	Mysore District Police Fund
28.7.1968	Hyderabad	Sarojini Devi Eye Hospital
7.9.1968	Madras	Madras Christian College
15.9.1968	Guntur	Loyola Public School
19.10.1968	Bombay	Seva Sadan School
3.11.1968	Delhi	Sivananda Satsangh
2.3.1969	Bombay	Vivek Education Society
16.3.1969	Delhi	Hindu College



Date	Place	Cause
6.4.1969	Nagpur	Lady Amritbh Daga College
5.7.1969	Tirunelveli	Sivasailam Avvai Ashram
12.7.1969	Madras	Krishna Gana Sabha
26.7.1969	Bombay	Kesarbai Kerkar Scholarship Fund
30.7.1969	Poona	Patil Mansions Residents Association
21.9.1969	Madras	Lady Muthiah Chettiar Girls High School
5.10.1969	Bangalore	Dr. Baliga Institute of Surgery, Manipal
10.10.1969	Bombay	Dr. Baliga Institute of Surgery, Manipal
1.11.1969	Madras	J. Krishnamurti Centre
15.11.1969	Delhi	Delhi Society for the Welfare of Mentally Retarded Children
24.1.1970	Bombay	Sri Guruvayurappan Bhakta Samajam
8.2.1970	Madras	Tiruvanmiyur Temple Tank Renovation
15.2.1970	Bangalore	MadhwaYuvaka Sangha Hostel
12.3.1970	Bombay	Vishva Hindu Parishad
15.3.1970	Trichy	Seethalakshmi Ramaswamy College
12.4.1970	Bangalore	Bangalore Tamil Sangham
2.8.1970	Nagpur	Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Nagpur
5.8.1970	Bhopal	Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bhopal
8.8.1970	Hyderabad	Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Hyderabad
12.8.1970	Rajamundry	KRL College for Women
15.8.1970	Gudivada	Sri Sankara Seva Samiti
17.9.1970	Madras	Sanskrit College
20.9.1970	Bangalore	Srirangam Swamigal Mutt
20.9.1970	Howrah	South Indian Association
18.10.1970	Delhi	Indraprastha College for Women
5.12.1970	Ernakulam	Ramakrishna Advaita Ashram, Kalady
23.1.1971	Madras	Vivekananda College
14.2.1971	Delhi	Swaminatha Swami Seva Samiti
3.5.1971	Bombay	Khopoli Janata Vidyalaya
6.9.1971	Bombay	Poona Prajna Vidya Peeth
19.9.1971	Madras	Indian Express Employees Welfare Fund
30.10.1971	Delhi	Railway Women Cultural Organisation
11.11.1971	Bombay	Ramakrishna Mission
12.12.1971	Madras	University Teachers Association
26.1.1972	Hyderabad	Kasturba Medical College, Manipal
30.1.1972	Madras	Kasturba Medical College, Manipal
6.2.1972	Bangalore	Lakshminarasimha Swamy Temple
9.2.1972	Kancheepuram	Somasundara Kanya Gurukula
13.2.1972	Delhi	Sri Ramana Kendra
23.2.1972	Nagpur Vishwa	Hindu Parishad School
15.3.1972	Bangalore	Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan
17.3.1972	Hubli	Pejavar Mutt Swamy Vidya Peeth





Date	Place	Cause
19.3.1972	Hubli	Pejavar Swamy Vidya Peeth
9.4.1972	Delhi	Adi Sankara Vimana Mandap
13.4.1972	Eluru	Rotary Club
2.10.1972	Ahmedabad	Kasturba Gandhi Hospital (Sevagram)
6.10.1972	Bombay	Kasturba Gandhi Hospital (Sevagram)
26.11.1972	Madras	Chinmaya Mission Vidyalaya
18.2.1973	Palghat	Rotary Club
11.3.1973	Calcutta	Vishwa Hindu Parishad
23.4.1973	Poona	Poona Sangeetha Sabha
29.9.1973	Quilon	Ramakrishna Advaita Ashram, Kalady
2.10.1973	Tuticorin	Siddhivanayakar Temple
22.1.1974	Bombay	All India Manufacturers Association
28.1.1974	Varanasi	Kamakotiwara Mandir
6.2.1974	Calcutta	Nari Sewa Sangh
22.4.1974	Calcutta	Railway Womens Welfare Fund
18.5.1974	Trivandrum	Rotary Club
10.8.1974	Bangalore	Maharani Lakshmi Amma Womens College
18.8.1974	Madras	For the purchase of Tyagaraja's house in Tiruvarur
2.10.1974	Tiruvannamalai	Arunachaleswarar Temple
5.10.1974	Madras	Bala Mandir, Madras
11.1.1975	Baroda	Charu Dutt Arogya Mandal
15.1.1975	Bombay	Sri Sankara Mutt
23.2.1975	Coimbatore	Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan
9.3.1975	Bangalore	Vishwa Hindu Parishad
31.8.1975	Erode	Ranga Bhawan Trust
17.10.1975	Bangalore	Sri Bhuvaneshwari Temple
26.10.1975	Madras	Don Bosco School
7.11.1975	Delhi	P.M.'s National Relief Fund
14.2.1976	Coimbatore	CMC Hospital Vellore
13.3.1976	Lucknow	Uttar Dakshin Cultural Organisation
25.4.1976	Dandeli	Dandeli youth Association
29.4.1976	Hassan	Hospital Fund
15.8.1976	Madras	Rajaji's statue, Delhi
20.8.1976	Nagerkoil	Pioneer Kumaraswamy College
25.8.1976	Trichy	BHEL School
2.10.1976	Delhi	Rajaji's statue, Delhi
7.11.1976	Delhi	PM's National Relief Fund
21.11.1976	Baroda	Maharaja Sayaji Rao University
23.11.1976	Jaipur	Railway Women's Welfare Fund
28.11.1976	Karnal (Haryana)	Red Cross
30.11.1976	New Delhi	Railway Federation
11.12.1976	Madras	Indian Navy Welfare Fund





Date	Place	Cause
27.2.1977	Gwalior	Sri Ramakrishna Ashram
12.3.1977	Tiruchirapalli	Swami Chinmayananda Vigyan Mandir
10.4.1977	Calcutta	Light House for the Blind
16.4.1977	Madurai	American College
24.4.1977	Bangalore	Rama Seva Mandali
27.4.1977	Mangalore	Mercara Hospital
16.7.1977	Hyderabad	Ravindra Sabha Building Fund
2.8.1977	Madras	Little Sister of Poor Organisation
28.8.1977	Mysore	Aralikatte Sri Ram Devasthanam
9.12.1977	Bangalore	Malleswaram Ladies Association
16.4.1978	Calcutta	Shankar Foundation
20.4.1978	Waltair	Vinayakar Venkateswara Perumal Temple
15.7.1978	Bangalore	Mount Abu Temple
2.8.1978	Bombay	National Centre for the Performing Arts
17.9.1978	Tirunelveli	Hindu College Centenary Celebrations
2.10.1978	New Delhi	Dalhi Council for Child Welfare
27.2.1979	New Delhi	Sarod Amjad Ali Abha Memorial
3.3.1979	New	Delhi Blind School
6.5.1979	Coimbatore	Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Coimbatore Kendra
4.11.1979	Bokaro	Prime Minister's Relief Fund & Chinmaya Building Fund
23.2.1979	Vellore	Don Bosco Women's School & College
12.7.1980	Madura	Salt Satyagraha Building Fund
6.9.1980	New Delhi	Spastic Society
15.9.1980	Coimbatore	Mani Secondary School
18.10.1980	Bombay	Chinmaya Mission
12.2.1981	Karimnagar	District Education Development Society
10.4.1981	Bombay	Andhra Mahila Samajam
10.9.1981	Bombay	Handicapped Children
22.11.1981	Jaipur	Mahavir Villand Samiti's Fund of Dr. Sethi for the Handicapped
29.11.1981	Secunderabad	Kalasagaram Building Fund
12.3.1983	Madras	Sri Meenakshi Temple, Houston USA
10.9.1983	Bombay	Sri Sankara Nethralaya, Madras
13.11.1983	Calcutta	Sri Sankara Nethralaya Madras
16.3.1985	Hyderabad	Railway Women's Welfare Fund
5.1.1986	Chickmangalur	Sri Kothandarama Swamy Temple
29.3.1986	New Delhi	Sri Sankara Nethralaya, Madras
24.5.1986	Bombay	Srirangam Rajagopuram Fund
31.8.1986	Salem	Sri Ambikapatheeswarar Veda Parayana Trust
25.10.1986	New Delhi	St. Stephen's College, New Delhi
3.3.1987	Secunderabad	In aid of 'KALASAGARAM' Sabha



M. S. and Accompanying Artistes

அம்மாவின நினைவுகள்

டி. கே. மூர்த்தி

பாரத ரத்னா திருமதி M.S. சுப்புலக்ஷ்மி அவர்களை பற்றி நான் எழுதும்போது சுமார் 77 ஆண்டுகள் பின்னோக்கி செல்ல வேண்டும். நான் M.S. அம்மாலை முதல்முறையாக சந்தித்தது எனது குருவும், வளர்ப்புதந்தையுமான தஞ்சாவூர் ஸ்ரீ வைத்யநாதர் ஐயர் வீட்டில்தான். அப்பொழுது பாலக்காடு ஸ்ரீ மணி ஐயரும் கூட இருந்தார். என்னை அறிமுகப்படுத்தும்போது, “இவனை உங்களுக்கு தெரியுமா?” என்று சதாசிவம் அவர்களிடமும், M.S. அவர்களிடமும் எனது குரு கேட்டார். “இவன்தான் மூர்த்தி. இவன் பல முதன்மைகலைஞர்களுக்கு வாசித்துகொண்டு இருக்கிறான்”. என்று கூறினார். “அப்படியென்றால் நாங்கள் அவனது வாசிப்பைக் கேட்க வேண்டும்” என்று ஸ்ரீசதாசிவம் கூறினார். எனது குரு “இன்று மாலை எனது வீட்டிலேயே பாடுங்கள் அவன் வாசிப்பான்” என்று கூறினார். அந்த 15 வயதில் வாசிக்க ஆரம்பித்து சுமார் 55 ஆண்டுகளாக M.S. அம்மாவிருகு வாசித்து வந்திருக்கிறேன். M.S. தம்பதிகள் என்னை சகோதர பாசத்துடன் நடத்தினார்கள்.

அவருடன் வெகுகாலமாக இந்தியாவிலும், பல வெளிநாடுகளிலும் சேர்ந்து வாசித்ததால், அவர்கள் மேடையில் என்ன பாடுவார்கள், எந்த கீர்த்தனையை எப்படி பாடுவார்கள் என்பது எனக்கு லாவகமாக வந்துவிட்டது. அப்படி நான் வாசிக்கும்போது மேடையிலேயே என்னை பாராட்டுவார்கள். நான் தனியாவர்த்தனம் வாசிக்கும்போது தாளத்தை கட்டுக்கோப்பாக போடுவதில் மிகவும் தேர்ச்சி பெற்றவர். நான் தாளத்தில் பல பேதங்கள் மற்றும் நடைகள் வாசிக்கும் பொழுது அதை ரசிப்பதுடன் சந்தோஷத்துடன் அப்பொழுதே பாராட்டுவார்கள். இது போன்ற மனோபாவம் உள்ளவர்கள் ஒரு சிலரே.

M.S. அம்மா பல இசை நிகழ்ச்சிகள் நன்கொடைக்காக பாடியிருக்கிறார்கள் என்பது எல்லாருக்கும் தெரிந்த விஷயம். “பூவுடன் சேர்ந்தது நானும் மணப்பதுபோல்” நானும் இதுபோன்ற நிகழ்ச்சிகளில் எனது பங்களிப்பை அளிக்க சந்தர்ப்பங்கள் அமைந்தது. இதை நான் பெருமையாகவும், மகிழ்ச்சியாகவும் நினைக்கிறேன்.

M.S. அம்மாவின நூற்றாண்டு தொடக்க விழாவில் கலந்து கொள்வதில் மிக்க மகிழ்ச்சியடைகிறேன்.

அத்துடன் அந்த பரமாச்சார்யர் அவர்களின் பேரில் அமைந்துள்ள அரங்கத்தில் இந்த நிகழ்ச்சியில் என்னை கௌரவிப்பதில் பெரும் மகிழ்ச்சியடைகிறேன். பரமாச்சார்யர் அவர்களை பல வருடங்களுக்கு முன் ஹைதராபாத்தில் சந்தித்த போது, இரவு 9 மணி முதல் மறுநாள் காலை 5 மணி வரை, அவருடன் பேசும் பாக்கியம் பெற்று, அவர் எனக்கு ‘மிருதங்க பூஷணம்’ என்ற விருதை அளித்து காஞ்சிமடத்து ஆஸ்தானவித்வானக்கி,



“நந்திகேஸ்வரர் போல் நீ வாசித்து தீர்காய்சாக இரு” என்று ஆசிர்வதித்தார் என்பது இத்தருணத்தில் நினைவுக்கு வருகிறது.

சீரும் சிறப்புமாக விளங்கும் இந்த மேடையில் என்னை கௌரவப்படுத்திய ஷண்முகானந்தா தலைவருக்கும் மற்றும் அனைவருக்கும் என்னுடைய அன்பான வணக்கத்தை தெரிவித்துக்கொள்கிறேன்.



T. K. Murthy accompanying M. S.



Dr. T. K. Murthy

Dr. T. K. Murthy is one of the senior most mridangam artistes in india.

இசைக்குயில் ஸ்ரீமதி சுப்புலக்ஷ்மி அம்மாவுடன் என் இசைபயணமும் அனுபவங்களும்

விக்கு வினாயகராம்



Vikku Vinayakaram

1960 களில், நான் G.N.B., செம்மங்குடி ஸ்ரீனிவாச அய்யர், அரியக்குடி ராமானுஜ அய்யங்கார் முதலான பெரிய வித்வான்களுக்கு கடம் வாசித்துக் கொண்டிருந்தேன். ஆனாலும் எனக்கு எப்படியாவது M.S. அம்மாவுக்கு வாசிக்க வேண்டும் என்ற ஆசை மிகப் பெரிய அளவில் இருந்தது. அப்பொழுது ஒரு சமயம் நான் செம்மங்குடி ஸ்ரீனிவாச அய்யர் கச்சேரியில் வாசித்த போது, M.S. அம்மா அங்கு வந்திருந்தார். நான் வாசித்ததை கேட்ட M.S. அவர்கள் என்னை வெகுவாய் பாராட்டினர்.

மரியாதை நிமித்தமாக நான் என் தந்தையுடன் M.S. அம்மாவை பார்க்க சென்றபோது, செம்மங்குடி மாமா என்னை அறிமுகப்படுத்தி வைத்தார். 1962 ல் முதன்முதலாக அம்மாவுக்கு வாசிக்கும் பாக்கியம் கிடைத்தது. அதற்கு பிறகு அவர்களின் எல்லா கச்சேரிக்கும் எனக்கு மாதத்தில் ஒரு நாள் என்ற நிலைப்போய் வருடம் முழுவதும் வாசிக்கும் வாய்ப்புகள் குவிந்தது.

1964-ல் எங்களுக்கு அமெரிக்கா செல்ல வாய்ப்பு வந்தது. எல்லா ஏற்பாடுகளும் முடிந்த நிலையில் பாகிஸ்தான் போர் வந்ததால் நாங்கள்



போகமுடியவில்லை. ஆனாலும் நான் மனம் தளராமால் அடுத்த வாய்ப்பை எதிர்பார்த்த நிலையில் அடுத்த ஆண்டே அந்த வாய்ப்பு கிட்டியது. காஞ்சி மகபெரியாவளிடம் சிறந்த பக்தி கொண்ட அம்மாவிற்கு ஐ.நா சபையில் பாடும் வாய்ப்பு கிடைத்த போது அவருடன் கூட வாசித்ததை என் வாழ்நாள் சாதனையாக நினைக்கிறேன். அம்மாவின் கணவர் ஸ்ரீ சதாசிவம் அவர்கள் மிகச் சிறந்த மனிதர். ஒவ்வொரு கச்சேரியையும் துல்லியமாக கணித்து அதற்கு உண்டான பாடல்களை வரிசைப்படுத்தி நிர்வாகம் பண்ணுவதில் மிகவும் வல்லவர். பயணத்திற்கு முன் எல்லா வாக்கேயகாரர்களின் பாடல்களையும் (ஸ்ரீ தியாகராஜர், ஸ்ரீ முத்து ஸ்வாமி தீட்சிதர், ஸ்ரீ ஷ்யாமா சாஸ்திரி, ஸ்ரீ புரந்தரதாஸர்) வரிசைப்படுத்தி ராகம், தாளம் முதலியவற்றை குறித்து புத்தகங்களாக பதிப்பித்தார்.



Vikku Vinayakaram playing In the U.N. concert with M.S.

அந்த ஐ.நா. கச்சேரிக்கு மிக நன்றாக ஒத்திகை பார்த்து எல்லா ஏற்பாடுகளும் முடிந்த நிலையில், M.S. அம்மாவிற்கு குரல் எழுப்பவில்லை. காஞ்சி மகாபெரியாவரின் பக்தையான அம்மா, அவரின் பிரசாதத்திற்காக காத்திருந்தார். ஆனால் எல்லா பிரசாதங்களும் வந்த நிலையில், காஞ்சி மடத்தில் இருந்து மட்டும் பிரசாதம் வரவில்லை. எல்லாரும் மனம் கலங்கி, என்ன செய்வது என்ற கவலையில் இருந்தோம். மாலை 3.30 மணிக்கு கச்சேரி ஆரம்பிக்க வேண்டும். மேடைக்கு கூட சென்று விட்டோம். அப்போது அதிசயிக்கும் வண்ணம், 3 மணிக்கு, காஞ்சி பிரசாதம் எங்களுக்கு வந்தது. அந்த குங்குமத்தை வாயில் போட்டவுடன், குரலில் உடைந்த சப்தம் கேட்டது. 'ஓம்' என்று ஆரம்பித்த அம்மா, அதுவரையில் இல்லாத வகையில் பிரவாகமாக பாட ஆரம்பித்தார். அங்கு வருவதற்கு முன்பு, ஜெனீவா, பாரிஸ், லண்டன், முதலான இடங்களில் பாடியதை விட, மிக அற்புதமாக அந்த கச்சேரி அமைந்தது. எனக்கும் நல்ல பாராட்டு கிடைத்தது. அப்போது நான் கடத்தை தூக்கி போட்டு வாசித்து பிரபலமாகி, அதற்கு பின் பல கச்சேரிகளிலும் ரசிகர்கள் மிகவும் விரும்பி கேட்க ஆரம்பித்தார்கள்.

அம்மா அவர்கள் பல ராகங்களிலும், தாளங்களிலும் பல்லவி பாடுவதில் வல்லவர். ஒரு பாடலை எடுத்துக்கொண்டால், அதைப் பல முறை ஒத்திகை



பார்த்து பிழையில்லாமல் பாடுவார். மஹாபெரியவர் சமஸ்கிருதத்தில் உலக அமைதிக்காக எழுதிக் கொடுத்த 'மைத்ரீம் பஜத' என்ற பாடலை ஐ.நா வில் பாடினார். அப்பாடல் பல மொழிகளிலும் மொழிபெயர்க்கப்பட்டு பிரபலமாகியது. பம்பாயில் ஒரு பியானோ வாசிப்பவர் அதை மேற்கத்திய சங்கீதத்தில் வாசித்தது வியப்பிற்குரியது.

நாங்கள் அமெரிக்காவில் இருந்த போது, ஒரு குடும்பம் போலவே இருப்போம். எல்லா வேலையும் பகிர்ந்துகொள்வோம். அந்த சமயம் எங்கள் குழுவில் இருந்த எல்லோருக்கும் செல்ல பெயர்கள் உண்டு. ஆனால் என்னை எப்படி அழைப்பதென்று அம்மாவின் பெண் ஸ்ரீமதி ராதாவிருந் மிகவும் சங்கடமாக இருந்தது, அந்த சமயம், அவர்களின் பெண் லக்ஷ்மி விளையாட்டாக என்னை 'விக்கு' என்று அழைக்க, அதுவே அவர்களுக்கு பிடித்து அன்னை அவரும் 'விக்கு விநாயகராம்' என்று அழைக்க ஆரம்பித்தனர்.

பம்பாய் ஷண்முகாந்தா சபையில் எங்களுக்கு ஏற்பட்ட அனுபவம் மறக்க முடியாதது. கச்சேரி ஆரம்பிக்கும் நேரம் பார்த்து மின்சாரம் தடை பட்டு ஒலி, ஒளி, எதுவுமே இல்லை. அரங்கம் முழுவதும் ரசிகர்கள் நிரம்பி இருந்தார்கள். இந்த நேரத்தில் அரங்க நிர்வாகிகள் சமயோசிதமாக அரங்கம் முழுவதும் மெழுகுவர்த்தியை கொளுத்திவைத்தனர். ஒலிபெருக்கி இல்லாமலே அம்மாவின் கச்சேரி 3 மணி நேரம் மிக அற்புதமாக அமைந்தது என் வாழ்க்கையில் மறக்க முடியாத அனுபவம். எனக்கு பல்வேறு வாய்ப்புகள் வந்த போதும், அவர்கள் என்னை பெருந்தன்மையுடன் உற்சாகப்படுத்தி அவைகளை ஏற்க வைத்தார்கள். அவர்களின் மற்றொரு உயர்ந்த குணம் எங்கள் எல்லாரையும் பாகுபாடு இல்லாமல் நடத்தியது. உதாரணமாக பயணத்தின்போது அவர் செல்லும் வகுப்பிலேயே எங்களையும் அழைத்து செல்வார்.

M.S. அம்மாவும் அவர் கணவரும் தான் எனக்கு நேரநிர்வாகம், ஒழுக்கம், கால தவறாமை எல்லாவற்றையும் கற்பித்தவர்கள். என் தாய், தந்தை போல் எனக்கு வழிகாட்டி என் வாழ்க்கையில் எனக்கு உறுதுணையாக இருந்தவர்கள். தன் சொந்த மகனைப் போல் எனக்கு திருமணம் செய்து வைத்து, எனக்கு துன்பங்கள் வந்தப்போதும் பேருதவி செய்தவர்கள்.

அவர்களின் தர்மசிந்தனை, நாம் எல்லாரும் கற்றுக்கொள்ள வேண்டிய ஒன்று. பல சந்தர்பங்களில் பலருக்கும் பண உதவி செய்துள்ளார்கள். தன் ராயல்ட்டியை கூட தர்ம ஸ்தாபனங்களுக்கு கொடுத்துவிடுவார். அவர் புகழ் என்றும் நிலைத்திருக்க எல்லாம் வல்ல இறைவனையும், காஞ்சி மஹா பெரியவரையும் பிரார்த்திக்கிறேன்.



< Vikku Vinayakaram

T. H. Vinayakram is an eminent, Grammy award winning senior ghatam vidwan.



My association with M. S. Amma

T. Rukmini

My memory goes back to the days when I used to listen to music regularly on the radio. I used to hear M. S. Amma's recordings and reproduce the songs as closely as I could because I was an ardent and devoted rasika of Amma. Songs like *Vanathin meedu mayil aada kanden* and *Maalaipozhudinile*, are still fresh in my mind. From those very days, I would never miss an opportunity to hear her live. Back then, concerts in Bangalore sabhas would begin by 4.15 p.m. I would be present at the hall early and scramble to get a vantage seat from where I could have a clear view of M. S. Amma and hear her sing.

I recall being introduced to Amma by a family friend, Mr. Nagarajan, a music lyricist and composer who went by the name '*Meenakshi Suta*'. Soon after, Shri Padmanabha Iyer (father of Padmalochana Nagarajan - a Bharatanatyam dancer and Carnatic musician for whose performances I used to sing padams), took me to M. S. Amma's house. My introduction to Amma which began thus went on to flourish to become a lasting association over the coming years.

Around the same time, I was a regular invitee at the Music Academy, Madras to participate in the afternoon performances. Once, Dr. Raghavan, the Secretary of the Academy then, asked me if I would be interested in providing violin support to M. S. Subbulakshmi for her performances at Bangalore. By then, I was married and had moved to Madras. It was a pleasant surprise and a lifetime dream come true for me. I was overwhelmed and accepted the offer with delight. That was my first opportunity to associate with M. S. Amma. I joined the entourage, in a special compartment arranged for the party. It was during this trip that I came to know about the meticulous organising prowess of Sadasivam mama. From picking me up from my house and assembling all the accompanying artistes in the green room an hour prior to the concert, checking the audio system etc.- every little detail was taken care of.



T. Rukmini with M. S.

Many opportunities to team with Amma as violin support came my way. I accepted them all with fervour. Our travels together were always something I looked forward to; full of fun and camaraderie. She enjoyed the travels as much as I did. Our relationship continued to grow as also my understanding of Amma's and Sadasivam mama's meticulous planning for every concert despite Amma being in the prime of fame and popularity.



Once, for a concert at Neyveli, M. S. Amma and Sadasivam mama along with the entire kutcheri team (violin, mridangam, ghatam, tambura artistes) travelled by road, and reached Neyveli a day prior to the day of performance. The following day, after lunch, a brief rest and quick refreshment, Amma commenced her preparation at 3 p.m for the concert at 6.30 p.m. She tuned her two tamburas (Lakshmi and Saraswathi) herself, and warmed up by singing for a while. Needless to say, the performance was a great success.

My closeness to M. S. Amma also taught me to meticulously prepare a song for presentation in a concert. She would take enormous care to perfect the rendering (*kachiitha padutudal*). Once she called me to her house to rehearse the Kambhoji kriti *Koniyadina* and the Thodi kriti *Dasharathi* complete with me playing along on the violin. When one as gifted as M. S. Amma takes such elaborate pains to perfect a presentation, it is bound to reach the audience in all its glory!



T. Rukmini accompanying M. S. in a concert

She was blessed with the unique gift of delivering the exact voice modulation for a song, thereby immortalising it as in the case of the Annamacharya sankirtanas like *Shriman narayana*, *Enta mataramuna*, *Nanati bratuku* etc. as well as the peerless *Kurai ondrum illai* and several such compositions. They all bear the indelible stamp of M.S.

For all her achievements, stature and fame, she was a very humble person. She would attend concerts of other artistes. One such occasion was when I was accompanying Mali Sir, much to my elation. Having attended a few of my other concerts too, she had words of appreciation which still ring in my ears.



← T. Rukmini

T. Rukmini is an eminent, award winning senior violinist.



Reminiscences

K. V. Prasad

I was only 15 years old when I jumped off the wall at the Kerala Fine Arts hall in Ernakulam along with my friend and sat on the side wings of the stage to listen to Smt. M. S. Subbulakshmi. To my good luck, I got the great opportunity to accompany her from the year 1984. Sadasivam mama and M. S. Amma after listening to my performance on the radio, invited me to meet them one day at their residence and this was conveyed to me by the great composer Kadayannallur Venkataraman.



K. V. Prasad accompanying M. S.

One of the memorable days of my life was when mama and she asked me to be her accompanist for a marriage concert. From there, the journey continued till her last concert. Though I have travelled abroad visiting many countries for light music shows, my first Carnatic music concert tour was with M. S. Amma playing for the inaugural concert of the 'Festival of India' in Moscow in 1987.

M. S. Amma's concerts, of course, were divine. I was fortunate enough to experience it by sharing the stage with her. Even though many popular songs were repeated on many stages because of public request, I have always felt that it sounded fresh each and every time, as if you were listening to it for the first time.

The preparation for the concert was immense. For each and every performance, I have never seen her without practising for a minimum of half an hour in the green room with her two tamburas before the concert. From then on, the mood would engulf all of us. While accompanying, if the appropriate syllable (*sollu*) was played by me, she spontaneously acknowledged it on the stage itself by using gestures. Accompanying her in concerts was an experience in itself. Whenever she got involved in her singing with utmost emotion, one could feel the magnetic pull. It used to have such an effect on me that it would make me meditative and silent. The public too would be awestruck as they would be soaked in that *bhava*.

Amma used to regularly listen to radio programmes and would meticulously ask me about the details of the performer especially the youngsters. She appreciated and encouraged youngsters who sang in the 30 minutes slot and would share her views with me.

To my good fortune, I had many opportunities to accompany her in her albums. I feel Amma's albums stood out because of the effort and time that she put into the work before and during the recordings.

I had the greatest opportunity to 'mix' mridangam for a recording which was casually sung by the legendary guru Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer and M. S. Subbulakshmi in a chamber concert. This concert was originally sung without any



accompaniment. Though it was a tough job, I am grateful to Semmangudi mama and Sadasivam mama who insisted that I could do it with ease because of my film recording experience. The album was named 'DIVINE UNISON'.

Amma has never changed her shruti for any concert at any time. She used to say that, at any point of time, no artiste should change the shruti, which she felt would affect the vocal chords and the quality of voice. She wanted to pass on this message to all practising singers.

Amma's presence was inexplicable and extraordinary. The vibration was divine. She drew spontaneous veneration from one and all irrespective of the surroundings.

Amma and Sadasivam mama have been a great blessing to our family. For my marriage, Amma blessed us by singing a few songs immediately after the *mangalyadharam* asking me and my wife to stand beside them.



M. S. and Radha singing at K. V. Prasad's wedding

From then onwards, the great couple have graced and blessed us with their presence in all our family functions. Both my children have also been blessed by their presence right from their *naamakaramam* ceremony onwards.

With the blessings of my parents and all gurus, I had the great opportunity of accompanying Bharath Ratna Smt. M. S. Subbulakshmi for a long period which has taken my stature to great heights. My family and me owe a lot to her. All this was possible only with the support and encouragement of Sri. Athmanathan.



← K. V. Prasad

K. V. Prasad is an eminent and sought after mridangam artiste.

Amma

R. K. Shriramkumar

Certain moments in life are very special and meaningful. They etch indelible footprints on the endless sands of time. The world revels in the incessant resonance that such happenings generate. One such moment, to which the temple town of Madurai played host about a hundred years ago, still continues to bring ecstasy to the hearts drawn to the arts. Smt. M. S. Subbulakshmi's presence, contribution and impact on society and the musical arena of our country in particular, stands unparalleled. Her music, replete with the power of purity, dignity and integrity,





strengthened the artistic bond across the length and breadth of this great land, transcending caste, creed, class, language, region and religion.



R. K. Shriramkumar accompanying M. S.

The realm of Carnatic music has seen many a great musician. However, with the advent of Amma, as she was addressed, with reverential fondness, it crowned itself with a glory of becoming global. Amma dedicated her life and soul to the cause of preserving, propagating and promoting this beautiful art form in all its splendour.

Plentiful are the reasons why she shines as the 'Pole Star' of Carnatic music. Numerous are the spaces where her music is heard. Unshakable was her dedication and conviction to present blissful music, faithful to every detail of it's form, nuance, aesthetic and grandeur. Innumerable are the causes that she has lent her voice for. Countless are the recipients of her philanthropy. Immeasurable was her love and affection to humanity. Unfathomable was her psyche that was deeply rooted in tradition, exuding the fragrance of true devotion. Many were the hurdles that she encountered in her lifetime, taking all into her stride, shedding the unsavoury. Intriguing was her trait to worry needlessly. Fascinating was her penchant for simplicity and inspirational was her persona of humility, charm and goodness.

Amma's music was wholesome in nature. Blessed with one of the best voices ever in the history of Indian music, her efforts to keep it resplendent all through her life was remarkable. Not a day would pass by when Amma would not sing, to the nectarous drone of her twin tamburas Lakshmi and Saraswati, the varisais in Mayamalavagaula and Shankarabharanam. Her passion to learn and absorb the best from the doyens of the Carnatic world was incredible. She also embraced, into her fold, the music of the North, having been guided by many a veteran of the Hindustani world.

Yet another blessing in her life was her wedlock with the dynamic Shri. T. Sadasivam. Mama, as he was addressed by one and all, became the pillar of support for Amma. With his astute intellect of forethought and presentation, he shaped Amma's acumen to dazzling heights. It was this unique combination of Amma's prowess as an outstanding and consummate musician and Mama's brilliance in promoting and supporting her talent that carved the iconic image for Amma.

Amma's concerts were marked with a splendid selection of items, covering a wide gamut of ragas, talas, compositional forms, manodharma aspects, vaggayakaras, poets and languages. Every composition would be rendered with utmost care and fidelity to the music, to the lyric- its enunciation and emotion and to the complete



experience of the oneness of sangita and sahitya. Her shruti consciousness was immaculate and was the hallmark of her music. Her articulation of the voice was a visual and aural treat that served as an ideal to be followed, especially by practitioners of vocal music. Amma's interests to dwell deeper into the pronunciation and meaning of each word of the composition helped her tremendously with her diction and emotive appeal. Thus her rendering of a kriti or a padam or a bhajan would be true to its form and feel. Her raga alapanas had the perfect blend of gamaka, shuddha svara, brigas, jarus, different kalapramanas and most importantly raktitva. Her niraval and kalpana svara singing never sacrificed the raga svarupa. The cheerful encouraging interactions with her accompanists on stage were testimony to her spirit of camaraderie. An inclusion of Bhajans, Abhangas, Shabads, Rabindra Sangeet and the like were also part of her concert repertoire. She presented them in all their correctness and enjoyable devotional fervour. On special occasions she has even rendered compositions in languages such as Urdu, Bengali, English, Arabic and Japanese! The count of composers whose compositions she has presented in her performing career is almost 200, that is verily a pan-Indian experience, and one of its kind.

Amma's music opened the eyes of the world to look up to Carnatic music. By her music she has touched an emotional chord in many a mortal in this great land of ours and the world at large. Her all embracing humble attitude, unflinching devotion to the art and her heavenly renditions make her matchless and adorable forever.

Having grown up with Amma's music all my life, to have been associated with her, to have been fortunate to learn so much from her, to have shared many a concert platform with her and to have been a beneficiary of her unconditional affection and care - words miserably fail to express the feeling of gratitude, happiness and honour as I recount these golden memories. It is undoubtedly due to the bountiful grace that the Divine Mother chose to bestow on me.

I am only reminded of the poignant verse (Bhavani tvam dase...) in the 'Saundaryalahari' where Shri Shankara Bhagavatpada describes the generosity of the Divine Mother. He says therein - when the lay devotee pleads to the Goddess to cast just a glance on him for his materialistic well being, She, out of her Infinite mercy, bestows the eternal joy of salvation!



Vikku Vinayakram, K. V. Prasad and R. Shriramkumar
with M. S. and Radha



← R. Shriramkumar

R. K. Shriramkumar is a front ranking Carnatic violinist who has accompanied the doyens of the Carnatic world, Smt. M. S. Subbulakshmi, in particular, for many of her concerts and recordings.





M. S. and Eminent Musicians and Critics

My Memories of M. S.

P. S. Narayanaswamy

I feel privileged to write a few lines about my association with M. S. Amma. Her skills and achievements are legendary, hence I would not touch upon the same.

Around 6 decades back, when I stayed in Trivandrum in my Guru Shri. Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer's house under *Gurukulavasam*, I used to accompany him very often during his concert tours to Chennai. In Chennai, he used to stay in Kalki gardens - M. S. Subbulakshmi and T. Sadasivam's residence. I had a chance to stay along with him and thus was lucky to get acquainted with her family. Sadasivam mama was very affectionate towards me treating me as his son, and M. S. Amma ('Kunjamma' to all close relatives and friends) showered her love and affection on me. Their daughters Radha and Vijaya were also equally warm and loving, considering me as their brother. Overall, I was treated as their family member and I too loved their family immensely and became very close with them.

While at M. S. Amma's house, my Guru used to impart music lessons to her and I have been present on a few such sessions. On some of those occasions, she used to make me sing certain kritis and if she had any doubts in *padantharams*, she used to get those clarified. She used to practise those kritis on the Veena, which facilitated her to achieve perfection in the kritis. We spent free time playing cards with Sadasivam mama, Semmangudi mama and others.

Rajaji used to visit the Kalki office often. I remember a funny incident on one such visit. Rajaji always preferred to drink steaming hot water. One day, as soon as Rajaji came, Sadasivam mama asked Pitchumani Iyer (the head cook) to bring hot water for him. When he brought the same, Semmangudi mama who was sitting close by, moved away a bit and said, "*Paathudaa!*" meaning 'take care' to not to spill on his thighs. To this, Rajaji jokingly commented, "*Semmangudikku thondaiyai vida thodai than mukkiyam*" meaning 'thighs are more important than the throat for Semmangudi'. We used to recall this incident often.

M. S. Amma had a natural flair for cooking and enjoyed serving the guests herself. 40 to 45 people having lunch at her place was a usual affair and she always was a perfect hostess. K. S. Narayanaswamy Iyer, Annaswamy Bhagavathar and many more vidwans used to stay in their house and they took care of all their needs with sincerity and affection. She was an expert Veena player too. Whatever she did, there would always be an element of beauty and perfection in it. I have not known her do anything without consulting Sadasivam mama. They made a wonderful and understanding couple. Right from the time she woke up in the morning, she would keep herself engaged in one activity or the other - practising music, doing puja, learning new songs and nuances of other languages, spending time to understand the meanings of kritis of other languages, singing bhajans, teaching and practising along with her daughters, drawing *kolams*, stringing flowers etc. Each of these activities were performed with utmost devotion and involvement. Vedic pundits used to visit her to explain the nuances of shloka renditions. She was very particular about proper diction and language perfection. She had released music recordings of various shlokas - Venkatesha Suprabatham, Vishnu Sahasranamam etc, which later became extremely popular owing largely to her divine rendition. Kadayannallur





Shri. Venkataraman visited her very often and taught her new songs tuned by him.

Before each and every recording, accompanists like Shri. V. V. Subramanian, Shri. T. K. Murthy and other vidwans used to have rehearsals at her residence. She had high respect and regards for all her co-artistes. She would listen patiently to even a child singing. Such was her humility and she remained a humble person throughout her life. Though she was popular worldwide, she lived a very simple life and was always approachable. To my knowledge, she never handled money on her own and showed least interest in it.

Her virtues are vast and boundless. I consider it my greatest privilege to have been associated closely with M. S. Amma's family, thanks to my Guru.



← P. S. Narayanaswamy

P. S. Narayanaswamy is the torch bearer of the Semmangudi bani and is one of the most sought after Carnatic vocal teachers for senior artistes.

A Celestial Being

E. Gayatri

The first time I saw her, I was a tiny tot of 9. The venue was Shri Parthasarathy Swami Sabha, Triplicane, Chennai. Late Shri. Venkatakrisnan, the former secretary of the sabha invited me to garland the legend during her concert. I remember Smt. Radha Viswanathan accompanying her, and nothing else. I could register the presence of Smt. Radha Viswanathan because of the legend's frequent and personal interaction with her on stage, through smiles and gestures. I was totally oblivious to anything or anybody other than Smt. M. S. Amma, that was the power of her magnetism! The sheer beauty of herself and her voice swept me off my feet and my gaze remained unwaveringly glued to the sight of her all through her memorable concert.

When it was announced that Baby Gayathri would be garlanding Smt. M. S. Subbulakshmi, I literally ran up the stage in my two plaits and half skirt. I had to be slowed down by Shri. Venkatakrisnan as he gave me the garland. As usual, I was aware of the bemused smiles of the audience and organisers at my childishness, (at the age of 9, crossing my silver jubilee concert, I had come to accept people's indulgent smiles as part of my life).



Baby Gayathri





As I neared the stage, I was aware of M. S. Amma's keen gaze on me and her sweet and loving smile. To the mind of a 9 year old, she seemed motherly, yet out of reach due to something extraordinary about her. As years went by, I was able to define the extraordinary quality as 'divinity' which lent her an almost visible golden aura around her figure, attracting and magnetising people by her physical presence and golden voice.

I have been one of her millions of admirers over the years, never attempting to disturb her by seeking an appointment. I knew she was a celestial being, a "Gandharva Sthree", and that her birth on earth was a karmic design.

In 1994, when Karthik Fine Arts conferred the 'Isai Peroli' award, I was particular that I should receive the same from M. S. Amma with her blessings. I was overjoyed when she accepted to present the award and for the first time, I sought an appointment with her to invite her personally.

She received me warmly like a typical, traditional housewife. There was nothing even remotely starry about her! I was struck by her daintiness and her absolute femininity. She exuded vulnerability and innocence making her seem almost child-like. It may sound odd, but I felt a strong surge of protectiveness towards her. I wanted to hug her. I was even awestruck by my own reaction to her, as I normally do not get overly carried away by feelings or sentiments and worse still, demonstrate the same (on the day of the function, my wish came true when she embraced me on the stage after presenting the award)! In the course of our conversation, I was surprised to learn that she listened to all the AIR morning and night concerts, and had great things to say about all the musicians, including myself. I told her that I listened to her Annamacharya Krithis (my favourite being the first volume which had "Sriman Narayana", "Manujudai Putti" "Bhavamulona", etc.) whenever I felt the pangs to visit Tirumala and listened to her "Shri Rangapura Vihara" whenever I longed to go to Srirangam. She smiled humbly.



M. S. Amma and E. Gayatri

The next interaction with her came when news came out that she would be the recipient of the ultimate award, "Bharat Ratna". I rushed to Park Sheraton, where my florist friend, Mithra used to have a lovely showroom. I asked for the best and biggest bouquet to be sent to M. S. Amma!

Years went by, and I got a special offer from Symphony Recording Company to record a veena version of M. S. Amma's Shri Venkateshwara Suprabatham, Shri Vishnu Sahasranamam and Bhaja Govindam. Even though I wondered how any instrument (due to lack of sahitya) could fulfill such a mission, I readily agreed as it was primarily a divine project and not only that, it was a reproduction of the vocal version of none other than M. S. Amma herself!



Shri. Rajesh Dhupad, who heads the recording company is another great admirer of M. S. Amma. He was particular that the album should be released only by her. On being contacted, Shri. Athma told us that she was extremely sick to go out anywhere. It was then decided that the album should be released at her bedside by M. S. Amma. The title of "Sangeetha Kala Saraswathi" (conferred by Symphony) was presented to me by Amma lying in bed, with her frail hands. I was extremely upset to see her so small and weak. As I reached for her feet to take her blessings, she stopped me and hugged me tightly with her bony arms, kissing my cheeks and forehead. I knew that I had received the ultimate blessing through outpouring of love in its purest form, coming from a celestial being like her.

I was moved to tears and at the same time I was also concerned that she should not strain herself. Shri. Athma, Shri. Rajesh and my husband were standing at a distance watching us. Amma still held on to my hand tightly and spoke something about her childhood, which I could not comprehend due to her weak tone. I was worried about not being able to understand what she was trying to convey and all I could decipher was her frequent mention of "Meenakshi" (obviously 'Madurai Meenakshi'). I could not decipher the rest as I had no inkling of the various names of friends and relatives she mentioned. I told her, "You are Meenakshi". She shook her head, not accepting what I said. I told her that it is the truth, though she does not know of it. She kept refusing and I left it at that, not wanting to strain her. Parting was painful and I wondered if I would be able to see her again.

Mylapore Fine Arts Club awarded me "Sangeetha Kala Nipuna" in the same year that M. S. Amma passed away. While the sabha awarded me, I was painfully conscious of the fact that Amma was right next door in Isabel Hospital (ICU) fighting for life. I thought of the irony of how close she was and yet how far! The very next day, her demise was announced and I was literally shattered! I rushed to see her body. There was a huge gathering and wading my way through the crowd, I placed a garland on her. She looked calm, peaceful and divine. Her karma was over, her music had burnt any remnants of karma and she had gone back to where she belonged- to the astral plane of celestial beings. While I was doing the 'pradakshinam' around her body, Sri Atma stopped me midway to tell me, "She was extremely fond of you". As someone tuned to cosmic messages, I felt it was M. S. Amma who was expressing herself through Sri Atma. I felt comforted. My concert in Mylapore Fine Arts came a week after her funeral and I played all the M. S. hits in my concert, dedicating the concert to her memory. I also instituted an annual prize for music competition winners in the name of Smt. M. S. Subbulakshmi in MFAC.

In the following year, I dreamed of something fantastic! In my dream, it was as if I am listening to Smt. Raji Gopalakrishnan's performance (she is one of the artistes whose music I admire) and the venue is 'Hamsadhvani'. Somebody is holding my hand and I turn to see that it is Amma who is holding my hand, sitting next to me. She smiles at me and says, "I like Raji's singing so much, that is why I came."

In the morning I woke up feeling happy about my dream and was wondering if there was something significant in Amma figuring in my dream. Then, I discovered that it was *Bharani Nakshtram* (Amma's star) that day! I was stunned at the significance of my dream! Drinking my morning cup of coffee, I sifted through the 'Hindu'. To my astonishment, Raji Gopalakrishnan's name was in the entertainment column, announcing her concert that evening in 'Hamsadhvani' in the memory of Smt. M. S. Subbulakshmi!

It was not only Bharani Nakshatram that day but the same Raji Gopalakrishnan was also performing in the same venue, Hamsadhvani and the subject was "M. S. Hits"!





I was flabbergasted and immediately placed a call to Smt. Raji to share my dream with her. I also called Shri. Athma and the late Shri. Ramachandran, Secretary of Hamsadhvani to share my dream!

On every *Bharani Nakshatram* day, I think of her in my mind and seek her blessings.

Courtesy - E. Gayatri's blog 'Jasmine Strings' with her consent.



< E. Gayatri

E. Gayatri, also known as 'Veenai Gayatri', apart from being an award winning and celebrated veena artiste is also the first Vice-Chancellor of Tamil Nadu Music and Fine Arts University and is the Honorary Director of the Tamil Nadu Government Music Colleges.

Perfection Personified

Dr. Sakuntala Narasimhan

Around 1981, I was in M. S. Subbulakshmi's house in Chennai, having flown down from Mumbai with the express intention of asking her to grant interviews for a book I wanted to write about her. I was on official assignment as a journalist, to interview some newsmakers of the city, but this pet project of mine that I had set my heart on, was very much on the agenda.

Her husband Sadasivam was present, and flatly dismissed my proposal saying, "whatever is to be written about her, has already been written by Dr. Narayana Menon and other distinguished persons. There is nothing more to write about."

My pleas that I was a great admirer of M. S. and a musician myself, trained by the same teacher who taught her too (Mayavaram Krishna Iyer, a "guru bhai" of Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer) were in vain. Sadasivam would not budge. I was sitting next to M. S. on the sofa. Sadasivam ensured that I wouldn't get a word in edgewise with her and asked her to "go get Horlicks for the guests". The moment she got up, he plonked himself next to me and soon sent me packing.

Now, after three decades, I am wondering if he was not right - whatever could be written about M. S. has already been written, many times over. And yet, I am sifting through my memories to see if there is something personal that I can add.

In the years since then I have turned a staunch feminist and often wondered what it was about this great artiste that defied feminist logic. She was no pushover, she commanded respect as a faultless human being - courteous, kind, compassionate, deferential to others (I have watched her interacting with stalwarts who were her contemporaries like Musiri Subramanya Iyer, Brindamma and T. Balasaraswathi the dancer). Young or old, famous or a novice, she was uniformly attentive to everyone, lending a ear with that beatific smile that was characteristic of her.

I remember the celebrations once at Kalki Kannan's place in Mumbai - a shashtiadapoorti, if I remember right. M. S. as a close friend of Kannan's family, was present. As is customary on such occasions, the host requested M. S. to sing. She turned towards Sadasivam who was seated at the other end of the hall among the men, with a wordless query. He nodded his assent, whereupon she began to sing. Deference to the husband, seeking permission even to sing a song? Why not? That was the kind of unimpeachable behaviour that she became a hallmark for. She was



a queen, a queen among queens in terms of melody, but she carried that reputation without a shred of arrogance, not even of self-importance. She helped collect crores of rupees for charity including the Kasturba Fund through her concerts, she garnered praise from Presidents and Prime ministers and world leaders but none of it made a difference to how she interacted with us teenage students when she visited our music college functions at Chennai. If feminism is all about a woman's freedom to decide her own responses, and M. S. decided this is how she wanted her relationship with her spouse to be, how can anyone fault her?

I pause here, to wonder whether the personality and personal life are relevant to an artiste's art - and quick comes the answer: Yes, very much, because art does not originate in a vacuum, it is moulded by the personality of the artiste, his or her inner matrix and predispositions. M.S.'s music was shaped by her mental make up. Which is why her music cannot be replicated.

If her personality dazzled, so did her music, equally. A voice like molten gold, full throated singing that reflected the divinity and joy she experienced while performing, the use of *kaku prayogas* (the modulation of voice, for greater aesthetic effect) at all the appropriate places, the strict adherence to classicism and tradition (no gimmicks, no maverick experimentations, no thumbing-her-nose at grammar, never). All this merits repetition. It was, for me, truly faultless music, everything just right, in just the right proportions too, whether it was *alapana*, or *kalpana swaras*, or variety in items chosen for a recital. 'Divine' is the word that comes repeatedly to mind. No one could fault her demeanour, her presentation, her music, her dress sense, her stage presence. Did she ever have an off day, an indifferent performance, a recital where she lost her temper or her cool, or showed irritation? I have seen her at close quarters, shared the dais with her on a few occasions, sat with her daughter Vijaya (we were both in *pavadai-daavani* then) while M. S. and Radha were on stage, but not once have I seen her frown or glare. NEVER! And because she had something nebulous that put her beyond ordinary human failings, her music reflected that inner sanctity, and her transcendence of mundane pettiness. One may be enormously gifted, musically talented to an awesome degree but it would not be the same, without that mental make-up that she had. No wonder there were imitators, but never anyone who could duplicate that rich emotiveness of her renderings.

I have heard other Bharat Ratna awardees - Ravi Shankar and Bismillah Khan, even interacted with them at close quarters. M. S. was different. Ravi Shankar could sweep his listeners off their feet with his superb *manodharma*, Bismillah Khan could melt hearts with his child-like simplicity and his mesmerising music, but M. S. was - well, M. S. In a class by herself. Because of who she was as a person, and the music that she offered. Some people should not be subject to human limitations, like mortality.

I have read (and reviewed) a detailed biography of her, where it says Sadasivam was responsible 100 % for what she became, he moulded her and took all decisions for her, including what she would wear, and what she would sing. Not once did she give the smallest hint about whether she felt oppressed or dominated. All she had was fulsome praise for Sadasivam and never failed to articulate her gratitude to him at every turn.

She and her music personified for me, perfection. Whether it was a *pallavi*, or a simple *alapana*, a complicated kriti like 'O *Rangashayee*' in Kambhoji (she and I had the same *paatantharam*), a detailed niraval or a simple bhajan. Those who faulted





her renderings saying that it was "too bhakti oriented" forget the complicated *kalpanaswarams* she presented, complete with a fancy *muktayippu* finale. Others had limitations - one was good in *padams* but didn't care for complicated *kalpanaswarams*, another was too much into esoteric calculations and deficient in *bhava*; M. S. was not deficient in anything. Hyperbole? I don't care; this is what I felt, and still feel. Blessed were those who had heard her.



◀ Dr. Sakuntala Narasimhan

Dr. Sakuntala Narasimhan is a Bangalore-based journalist, author, musician and consumer rights activist.

Fireworks and Soulful Surrender

Music critic Subbudu

In his 1976 critique of M. S. Subbulakshmi's academy concert, Subbudu, a tough nut himself, assessed two pieces in his usual acerbic style. "M.S.'s concert had both fireworks and soulful surrender. As far as I know, Maha Vaidyanatha Iyer's *Melakarta Chakram* has not been handled by anybody. Without demonic practice and incredible memory, this trapeze act would end in disaster. Shifts from one raga to another have to be on a razor's edge. We praise so many for effortless singing. None of them have the ability to even approach this feat.

We see the horror of even senior vidwans today saying pallavi but racing along *sarva laghu* tracks and depending on the mridangam finale to get them ashore. Absolutely no *kanakku vazhaku!!*

M. S.'s *khanda jati jhampa pallavi* was structured as 8 beats only but divided as 5 and 3. M. S. and Radha managed this pallavi with great skill and proved their intelligence. Radha's *pratilomam* had the right length. No messing in the *niraval* either. Everything was in place. Nor was the format spoilt in the *madhyamakalam*. That day the *Bhairavi alapana* took the audience straight to *Gandharvaloka* (realm of the celestials). *Chatushruti Daivatam* winked here and there in the *alapana* without dominating the proceedings. And no cheap smell of *Kharaharapiya* in the *Bhairavi!*"

* Taken from the book *MS and Radha - A saga of Steadfast Devotion* by Gowri Ramnarayan



◀ Subbudu

P. V. Subramaniam popularly known as 'Subbudu' was one of the most important music and dance critics of India.





Happy Birthday Carnatic Music

R. Ganesh

The earliest memories for me about M. S. Amma , as we all fondly call her, is of her voice wafting in the background during mornings and other times of the day. All the immortal songs, bhajans and shlokas are still fresh in my memory.

My mother was her greatest fan. She would talk excitedly about the M. S. blue colour and her diamond ear studs apart from how she looked on stage - an epitome of graciousness and regal grandeur that no one can ever match.

I have had the great fortune of meeting her quite a few times. The most unforgettable occasion was the one time when she came home. We had arranged a *Saptaham* of Mahaperiyava's life in our home. The discourse was done by none other than Shri. Ganesha Sharma. We got a call from M. S. Amma's office saying she will attend on one of the days. Not to disappoint us, she came one day. She picked a nice spot where she was a little away from the crowd that had gathered to hear about Periyava's life and teachings yet very near us.

We had a great time as she regaled us with her experiences. One of them is as follows:

The great kanjira artist Shri Dakshinamurthy Pillai was a constant member in her concerts. He was also a mystic and a very saintly figure. Once, she was stricken with a very bad sore throat before a concert. Shri Dakshinamurthy Pillai on coming to know about this, immediately asked her to chant a particular *Thiruppugazh* several times and also gave her *vibhuti prasadam* and Lo !!! She was alright during the concert and as usual the concert proceeded very well.

So what is great about M. S. the musician is that she was one who changed the entire course of what Carnatic Music is today. Everyone is trying to emulate her. We can see that she is in everyone's voice. This 'Bharath Ratna' lives on!

Happy Birthday Carnatic Music!!



< R. Ganesh

R. Ganesh is the noted violinist of the eminent violin duo Ganesh-Kumaresh.





Memories of a Legend

Dr. Vijayalakshmy Subramaniam

I had joined All India Radio Chennai as a Programme Executive in 1988. It was an exciting time for me. The charm of working for AIR and that too in hallowed Chennai! Hallowed for a musician like me.

I got to interact with many stalwarts here like Semmangudi Shri R. Srinivasa Iyer, Palghat Shri K. V. Narayanaswamy, Smt. T. Brinda, Smt. D. K. Pattammal, Lalgudi Shri G. Jayaraman - the list is quite long and impressive. In that sequence, was a very memorable meeting with the queen of Carnatic music - M. S. Subbulakshmi!

I had the opportunity to interact with her four times.

The first time, I got to visit her home to invite her for a recording to our studios. Amma was full of smiles and held my hand with a lot of warmth. Anticipating our arrival, some snacks had been prepared and we were served with *shukku kaapi*. It was delicious! Easwaran Sir was moderating the conversation and Amma just sat by smiling in agreement. We also wanted some audio bytes from here regarding where she was and what she had been doing when the Indian Independence was declared. Somehow Mr. Easwaran was not for her talking about anything and felt it was enough if Amma sang. To say we were disappointed would be an understatement! But the way amma accepted his opinion was a lesson in etiquette.

The next time we met when M. S. Amma had come to our studios for a recording. The epitome of grace and charm, it was a sheer blessing to be in the same room as her. A starry eyed youngster I was then, fresh at work. I could not believe my good fortune to be able to help her with the tambura and the recording.



At an AIR recording

The next opportunity came when I was asked to give a special concert of Jayadeva's '*Ashtapadis*' for a sabha in Chennai. I had set to music some of the songs myself and was on the lookout for someone to do the rest. After MUCH persuasion, I got Kadayannallur Shri.Venkataraman to agree to do so. He was employed with the AIR and I would meet him occasionally. Reticent by nature, he was already well known for having tuned many compositions for M.S Amma. He retired soon. Once I had to hand over something to him and he suggested I come to Kotturpuram where M. S. Amma lived. The scene is etched in my mind as though it were yesterday.





Amma was singing something tuned by him with a hand held *shruti petti*. She smiled and invited me in. After speaking to me for a few minutes, she asked me to sing. I sang '*Bhayayami Gopala Baalam*' in Yamuna Kalyani. After a couple of *sangatis*, she joined me and sang the entire song with me!! She then spoke highly of my singing and blessed me to reach greater heights! Such magnanimity in a person of her stature was indeed a revelation.



With M. S. Amma at her residence

The last time I met her was with an American scholar, who wished to pay his respects to her. She was not too well and some dementia had set in. Mama was no more. She was still very gracious and listened with a smile to my friend sing '*Shri Kamalambike*' in Shri ragam in a lovely American accented baritone. She was rather frail but very spirited.

M. S. Subbulakshmi is an inspiration for all time, not just in her singing but also in the grace and beauty she nurtured it with.



< Dr. Vijayalakshmy Subramaniam

Dr. Vijayalakshmy Subramaniam is an eminent Carnatic music vocalist, holds a doctorate in Music, has a Fulbright Visiting Lecturer Fellowship and has also worked in All India Radio as a Program Executive.





Honours, Titles, Awards and Benediction

Benediction from Shri Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam

Shri Chandramouleeswaraya Namaha:

**Shri Sankara Bhagavadpadacharya Paramparagatha Moolamnaya
Sarvagnapeeta :**

**His Holiness Shri Kanchi Kamakoti Peetadhipathi
JAGADGURU SHRI SANKARACHARYA SWAMIGAL
Srimatam Samsthanam**

No. 1, Salai Street, Kanchipuram - 631 502.

*Tanvaanaaha Bhaktiroopena Subbulakshmiyashassrajam
Chandramouleekripaadrishtya Raajantaam Yashasaa Bhuvhi*

The eternal Dharma of our nation is the pioneer for the entire world. The origins of Indian classical music system go back to the Vedas. Many different legends have grown up concerning the origins and development of Indian classical music. Such legends go a long way in showing the importance that music has in defining Indian culture.

Smt. M. S. Subbulakshmi, a flawless singer whose voice had a divine power, is the first singer in India to be presented with the Bharat Ratna, the highest award given to any civilian. With her rock-solid technique, sure tone, deep spirituality and splendid emotional expression, she was rightfully considered an Indian national treasure during her lifetime. There are many aspiring musicians to whom she is a 'manasika' guru, a role model. Her humility in the midst of such enormous talent and recognition is highly appreciable. Charitable causes were close to both Smt. M. S. Subbulakshmi and Shri. Sadasivam's hearts. They gave unflinchingly to charity and she sang innumerable concerts for such causes. The grace of the Paramacharya of our Kanchi Kamakoti Peetham, Shri Chandrasekharendra Saraswati Swamigal, strengthened this attitude; all the earnings from her concerts and even commercial recordings went towards noble causes.

Let the abundant grace of Lord Chandramouleeswara accompanied by Shri Mahatripurasundari bless every effort to perpetuate the legacy of Smt. M. S. Subbulakshmi.

Narayanasmrithi

(Extract from the benediction for release of the book 'Colossus of Carnatic Music' by Shri. Shankar Venkatraman)





List of awards received



1940	Isai Vani
1954	Padma Bhushan
1956	Presidential Award / Sangeet Natak Academi Award
1967	Doctorate from Rabindra Bharati University, Calcutta
1969	Sangita Kalanidhi, Music Academy Madras
1970	Isai Perarignar, Tamil Isai Sangam, Madras
1971	Doctorate from Sri Venkateswara University
1973	Doctorate from Delhi University
1974	Ramon Magsaysay Award, Philippines
1975	Swar Vilas title conferred by Sur Singar Samsad, Bombay
1975	Padma Vibhushan
1975	Saptagiri Sangeetha Vidwan Mani, Sri Venkateswara Tyagarajaswami Festival, Tirupati
1979	Doctorate of Literature, Honorary Degree from Kala Sangeeth Vishwa Vidyalaya, Khairagarh, Madhya Pradesh
1979	Producer Emeritus, AIR and Doordarshan
1980	Thanipperum Kalaigarnar, Tamil Nadu Eyal Isai Nataka Manram, Silver Jubilee

1980	Asthana Vidwan of Tirupati Devasthanam
1980	Doctorate from Benares Hindu University
1981	Member of Honour, UNESCO International Music Council
1981	'Desikottama' Doctorate from Vishwa Bharati University, Shantiniketan
1986	Spirit of Freedom Award, VST Industries, Delhi
1987	Doctorate from University of Madras
1988	Trusteeship of IGNSA (Indira Gandhi National Center for the Arts)
1988	Kalidas Samman
1988	Ustad Hafeez Ali Khan Award
1990	Indira Gandhi Memorial Award for National Integration
1991	Konark Samman
1996	The Dr. Rajah Sir Annamalai Chettiar Birthday Award
1998	Bharat Ratna Conferred by the President of India on 14th January
2000	SIES Shri Chandrasekarendra Saraswati National Eminence Award
2004	Lifetime Achievement Award by Delhi Government





Ramon Magsaysay



M. S. receiving the Ramon Magsaysay Award in 1974





The Ramon Magsaysay Award



Subbulakshmi, M. S. | CITATION



Exacting purists acknowledge Srimati M. S. SUBBULAKSHMI as the leading exponent of classical and semi-classical songs in the Karnataka tradition of South India. They and ordinary people alike find in the compelling melody and sweetness of her bhajans, or folk spirituals, "a deep, pure and abstract emotional appeal," transporting them to a sense of unity with the supreme deity. Rooted in millenia of India culture and mythology, her bhajans are a means of prayer and solace in the villages where bhakti marg, or the way of devotion, supersedes more intellectual philosophies.

The gift of song that reaches the hearts of her countrymen results from a passionate pursuit of artistic excellence. As a girl of 10, in the South Indian cultural centre of Madurai where she was born in 1916, SUBBULAKSHMI began accompanying her celebrated mother's singing and veena playing. An enchanting voice, hard work, exacting discipline, character, humility and willingness to learn from everyone, made her at the age of 17 a soloist in her own right. When, at the age of 24, she married T. Sadasivam - now publisher of the prestigious Tamil weekly, Kalki, in Madras - she gained also her "friend, philosopher and guide."

As, with maturing years, SUBBULAKSHMI's versatility encompassed Hindustani classics of North India and folk songs of many regions, her following grew far beyond the South; wider audiences first heard her in the film Meera. Mahatma Gandhi asked only to hear her sing "Hari Tuma Haro," or "Thou God," on his 78th birthday, which proved tragically to be his last. Jawaharlal Nehru, after hearing her sing, said, "Who am I, a mere Prime Minister, before a Queen of Song?"

On tours abroad SUBBULAKSHMI sang at the Edinburgh International Music Festival and before the United Nations. Her vocal "filigree," traversing three octaves, and fidelity to tone and rhythm reached through to listeners unfamiliar with melodic Indian music that neither needs nor implies harmony.

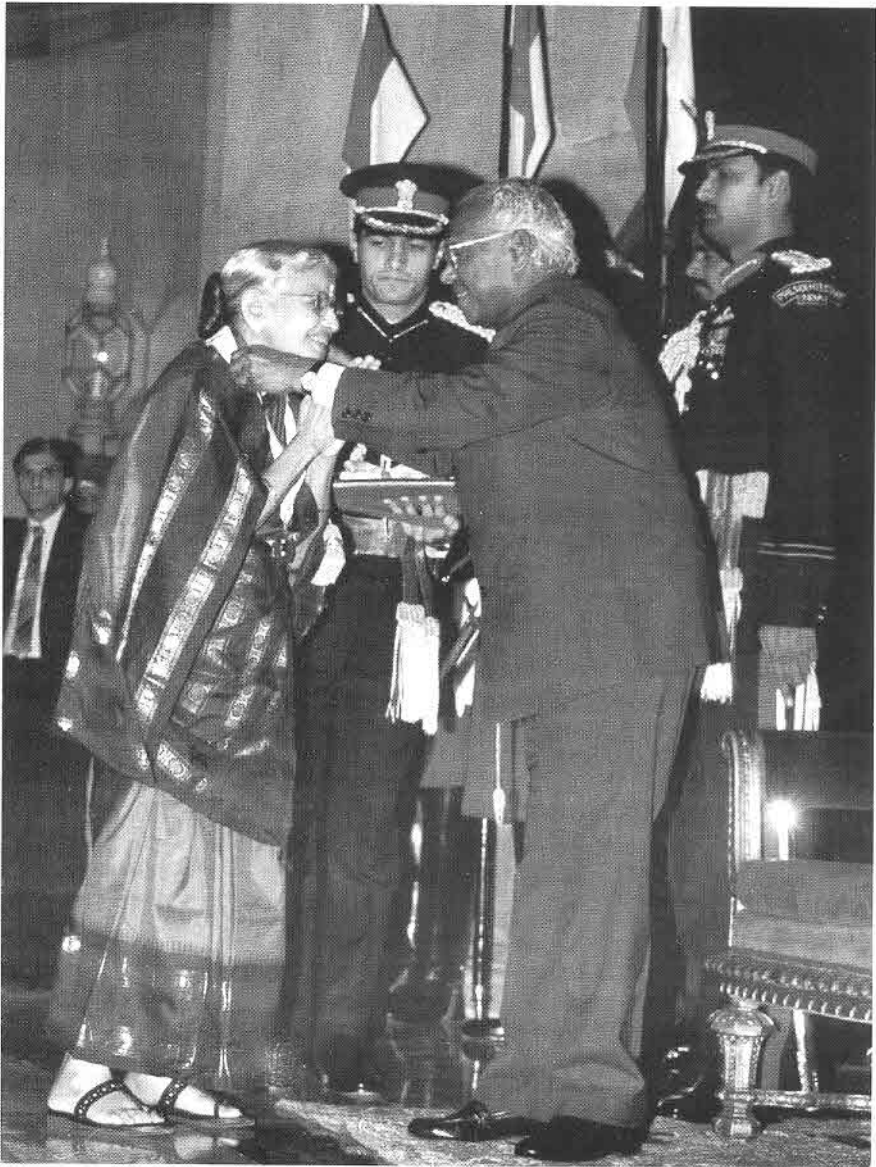
In April 1944, after five successful benefit performances given for the Memorial Fund honouring Gandhi's wife, Kasturba, SUBBULAKSHMI's voice became an instrument for public causes. Receipts of concert halls - filled to overflowing - and open amphitheatres - often packed with tens of thousands paying only four annas each (three U.S. cents) so as to deny no one the joy of her songs - have been given to constructive works. Equivalent to over one million U.S. dollars, her contributions have benefited foundations for the poor, hospitals, orphanages, schools, and music and journalism institutes. While becoming the idol of millions, this lady has trained deeply religious, unpretentious and almost childlike in her simplicity.

In electing Srimati M. S. Subbulakshmi to receive the 1974 Ramon Magsaysay Award for Public Service, the Board of Trustees recognises her exalting rendition of devotional song and magnanimous support of numerous public causes in India over four decades.





Bharat Ratna Award



M. S. receiving Bharat Ratna





'DOCTOR' OF MU'SICK'

The divine touch blessed by the Great Sage of Kanchi, His Holiness the Paramacharya has simply transferred M. S. herself into a 'Sage of Music'. Her music is pure music and never mu'sick'. She herself being an (honorary) doctor* can cure many through her mellifluous music. That dignity and grace adorned with elegance was nothing but an outcome of true bhakti.



Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer



* Doctorates

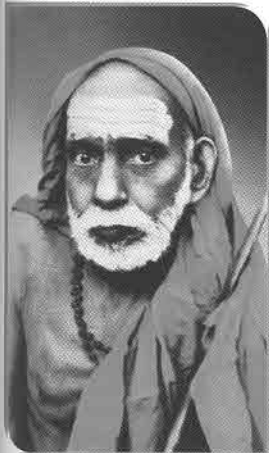
- 1971 D.Litt - Sri. Venkateswara University
- 1973 D.Litt - Delhi University
- 1979 D.Litt - Indira Kala Sangeet Viswavidyalaya, M.P.
- 1980 D.Litt - Benares Hindu University
- 1981 Desikottama Doctoral Degree - Viswa Bharati University, Shantiniketan
- 1987 D.Litt - Madras University





Association with Paramacharya

M. S. and Mahaswami



At the time of their marriage, Sadasivam and M.S. did not know the Kanchi Mahaswami. They met the seer for the first time in 1954 in somewhat unusual circumstances. Sadasivam was undergoing great mental strain. M.S. had been afflicted by an attack of typhoid and he had reached nowhere in his search for a suitable boy for his daughter Radha. He might get some relief from all his tensions, a friend suggested, if he sought the blessings of the Kanchi Seer. Sadasivam did and the effects were beneficial. M.S.'s health improved rapidly and Radha's marriage was fixed within three months of the visit. The Sadasivams became ardent devotees of the Kanchi seer from that time on.



Initially, however, their marriage did not sit well with the Paramacharya. Almost a decade and a half had passed since the formal wedding and MS had, for all practical purposes, completed her process of renewal. But when the couple went to the Paramacharya for his blessings, they found him hesitant to oblige. Very soon, however, the situation would change and Sadasivam could succeed in removing all traces of the Paramacharya's reservations. Protector though he was of the Sankara Peetham's hallowed traditions, the Paramacharya was practical enough to make exceptions. Under the pressure of Sadasivam's unwavering devotion and powers of persuasion, he would shift his earlier position and accept the couple as his lifelong bhaktas. Once, he even gave M.S. the highest possible Vedic tribute by saying, "Whatever she is, she is like Brindavan tulasi."

Through times good and bad, Sri Chandrasekarendra Saraswati, commanded the devotion of the Sadasivams. A sage of extraordinary intellectual attainments, the Paramacharya became a living God to M.S. To sit in the presence of the Guru, to receive the sacred ash from his hands, was benison enough. Her greatest joy was to sing in his presence. To be called by the Acharya to sing through the night as he performed an elaborate Sivaratri Puja was sheer heaven. Radha and Kunjamma recalled those lamp-lit hours with tears.



On the stage too, M.S. sang with the Paramacharya before her mind's eye and offered her music to him. "That is why, so many times, when I felt that I was going to fail, he came to my aid." she said with utter conviction. That faith was visible on her face when she sang the sloka *Lokkodharana Kaaranam* in which the word "Dandapani" (the hand holding the staff of renunciation) brought a catch in her throat. In the song *Chandrasekharamaasraye* (Kiravani), when she repeated 'Karaa *Abhyamudram*' in niraval, it was easy to see that she visualized the Acharya's hand raised in benediction.



The Sadasivams never took any major step without consulting him. M.S. sought his blessings before starting on her US trip to sing in the United Nations Assembly Hall. "He was seated in a small room. A little clay lamp cast a quiet flickering light. I entered, and did *namaskaram*. My face reflected my anxiety. I didn't have to say anything. He picked up a tray filled with *kumkumam* and placed his hand on it. "Everything will go well." he said. I took the *kumkumam* and was filled with peace. I knew that with his blessings nothing could harm us".

One story she never tired of telling was how, getting ready for the UN concert, she accidentally got drenched in a shower of icy water. Cold and shock blocked her throat. In desperation, she opened the dressing case in which she always carried a portrait of the Acharya. She didn't pray... just sat in front of the picture. After all, he knew what to do. When they reached the venue, she could hardly speak. Finally, on the stage, when she opened her mouth, the voice rang pure and true. Kunjamma concluded, "I didn't sing. He sang for me."

Inspired by the sage of Kanchi, the angelic voice of M.S. produced Vishnusahasranamam, Venkateshwara, Kamakshi, Meenakshi and other suprabhatams, Adi Shankara shlokas on all deities, all of which resonate in every house, every morning. When she sang the Ragamalika of 72 Melakarta ragas composed by Maha Vaidyanatha Iyer, the sage blessed her and observed that she will ever live through her music.

On one of her last trips to Kanchipuram, Kunjamma sat on the floor before the Acharya and sang at his bidding. She began by looking prayerfully at him, but soon, her eyes were shut and she was looking at the Guru within her heart.

As she went on with *Sri Chandrasekhara Yatindram* the Guru removed his tulusi mala and sent it down to her. She received it with *bhaya bhakti*. When she reached home, someone noticed the gold necklace entwined in the leaves. Kunjamma wore it as a blessing. When her husband passed away, she sent it to the Kamakshi Temple, back to Kanchi.

She received the SIES Sri Chandrasekarendra Saraswati National Eminence Award in 2000.

She gave what she had, all through her life journey and when the end came, she had just the *ponnadai* which the Mahaswami of Kanchi gave, that draped her as her mortal remains were consigned to flames.





கானதபஸ்வினி

சங்கர் வெங்கட்ராமன்

‘கஞ்ச தளாயதாசுதி... காமசுதி... கமலாமனோஹரி’ என்று நம் இல்லத்தை தேடி வந்து உள்ளத்தில் உறைந்து நம்மையும் அந்தப் புனிதத்தலமான காஞ்சிபுரத்திற்கே அழைத்துச் செல்லக்கூடிய பாவம் பொதிந்த பக்தி ரசம் ததும்பும் குரல்... அதுதான் நம் பாரததேசத்தின் பொக்கிஷமான “பாரதரத்மா” டாக்டர் M.S. சுப்புலட்சுமி அவர்களின் தேமதுரக் குரலோசை.

காஞ்சி மகான் நடமாடும் தெய்வமான ஸ்ரீமஹா பெரியாவளிதம் அந்த பக்தியும் பிரேமையும் M.S. அவர்களுக்கு உண்டு. கல்கி கார்டென்ஸ்க்கு பெரியவா விஜயம் செய்த போது, கல்கி காரியாலயத்திற்கு வந்து அருளாசி வழங்கியது முதல், M.S. அவர்கள் பெரியவா பக்தையாகவே மாறியிருந்தார். ஸ்ரீ வெங்கடேச சுப்ரபாதம், விஷ்ணு சஹஸ்ரநாமம் தொடங்கி, காசி, ராமேஸ்வர சுப்ரபாதங்கள், கனகதாரா ஸ்லோகம், லக்ஷ்மி அஷ்டோத்தரம், என்று எந்த ஒரு சமீப்கிருத சலோகமாகட்டும் பெரியாவாளிடம் ஆசி வாங்கிவிட்டுத்தான் பதிவு செய்யவே போவாராம் M.S.

“எல்லா தணிகர்களும் கொடுக்கும் போது கையில் கொஞ்சம் பிடித்து வைத்துக் கொண்டதான் கொடுப்பார்கள். சதாசிவம் ஒருவன்தான் கையை விரித்து எல்லாவற்றையும் அப்படியே கொட்டிடுவான்” என்று சதாசிவம் அவர்களின் கொடைத்தன்மையை பாராட்டினாராம் பெரியவா.

மேலும், “எல்லோரும் சதாசிவத்தை ‘போஜ மகாராஜா’ன்னு சொல்லறா. அவன் ‘போஜன்’ இல்லை. ஏன்னா ‘போஜன்’ இருந்து கொடுத்தான். ஆனால் சதாசிவமோ கொடுக்கறத்துக்காகவே இருக்கப் பண்ணிக்கறான். போஜ ராஜனுக்கு கஜானா எப்பவும் ரொம்பி வழிஞ்சுண்டேயிருந்தது. அதனால் தயக்கமில்லாம கொடுத்தான். இவனோ பைசா கையில் வச்சுக்காம வற்றையெல்லாம் அள்ளி அள்ளி கொடுத்துண்டே இருக்கான்” என்று சொன்னாராம் பெரியவா.

சென்னை சமீப்கிருத கல்லூரியில் 1950களில் பெரியவா முகாமிட்ட போது முநிஸ்ரேஷ்டரின் சந்நிதானத்திலே மகாசிவராத்திரி போன்ற புண்ணியகாலங்களில் ‘சம்போ மகாதேவா’ (பௌளி), ‘பராத்பரா’ (வாசஸ்பதி), ‘ஸ்ரீ சந்திரசேகர யதீந்தரம் ஆஸ்ரயே’ (சங்கராபரணம்) ஆகிய பாடல்களைக் கட்டாயம் இடம் பெறச் செய்து அந்த சூழலையே தெய்வீக மணம் கமழும்படி செய்துவிடுவார் M.S.

‘கானலோல’ N. S. ராமச்சந்திரன் இயற்றிய சங்கராபரண கிருதியான ‘ஸ்ரீ சந்திரசேகரயதீந்தரம் ஆஸ்ரயே’ பாடலை ஒரு முறை பெரியாவாளை



தரிசிக்கச் சென்றபோது M.S. பாடிக் கொண்டிருக்க, கிணற்றுக்கு அந்த பக்கம் நின்றபடி பெரியவா கானத்தை ரசித்துக் கொண்டிருந்தார். கிணற்றிலிருந்து மோட்டார் போட்டு, மேலிருந்து டாங்கில் நிரம்பிய நீரானது ஜலதாரையாக கடகடவென ஸ்ரீ ஸ்வாமிகளின் தலையில் விழத்தொடங்கியது. சட்டென பாட்டை நிறுத்திவிட்டார் M.S. தமது திருக்கரத்தால் சமிஞ்சை செய்து பாட்டைத் தொடரும்படி ஆக்ஞாபித்தார் பெரியவா. பிறகு மீண்டும் ஒரு முறை பாடலை பாடும் படியும் பணித்தாராம். பின்னர், அந்தப் பாடலுக்கு பதம் பிரித்து அழகாக அர்த்தமும் சொல்லி ஆசிர்வதித்தாராம்.

M.S. சதாசிவம் தம்பதியருக்கு பெரியவாளை அறிமுகம் செய்து வைத்ததே செம்மங்குடி ஸ்ரீனிவாசய்யர்தான். அது தொடங்கி பெரியவாளின் 100-வது ஜெயந்தியை (கனகாபிஷேகம்) ஒட்டி 'சதாப்தி சமர்ப்பண்' என்ற தனிப்பாடல் தொகுப்பையே அவரது பாதார விந்தங்களில் சமர்ப்பித்து பின்னொர் பெரியவா சித்தி அடைந்த பிறகும் தொடர்ந்தது 'மணிமண்டப' பிரதிஷ்டை மூலமாக! 72 மேளராகமாலிகை ஒலிநாடாவில் பதிவு செய்யப்பட்ட பின் பெரியவாளுக்கு போட்டுக் காட்டப்பட்டது. அதை கேட்டுவிட்டு, "சூரிய சந்திரன் இருக்கும் வரை உன்னுடைய இந்தப் பணிநீடித்து நிலைக்கும்" என பரிபூரணமாக ஆசிர்வதித்தாராம்.

ராஜீவ்காந்தி பிரதமராக இருந்தபோது, தமிழக அரசு மூலம் சதாசிவம் தம்பதியருக்கு வீடு ஒன்றை ஒதுக்கி தரும்படி பணித்தார். M. G. R. அமைச்சரவையில் அங்கம் வசித்த மாண்புமிகு வி. வி. சுவாமிநாதன் மூலம் M. S. இல்லம் தேடி வந்து விவரம் தெரிவிக்கப்பட்டது. சதாசிவம் தம்பதியர் வழக்கம்போல் மறுத்துவிட்டனர். பெரியவாளுக்கு இந்த விஷயம் காதில் எட்டியபோது, "கவர்மெண்ட் என் குழந்தைக்கு (சதாசிவத்துக்கு) உபகாரம் பண்ணினும்தான் தோணித்துன்னா பழையபடி கல்கி கார்டன்ஸயே மீட்டுக் கொடுக்கட்டுமே" என்றாராம். மீட்டுத்தர ரூ. 2 கோடிக்கு மேல் ஆகும் என்றனர் அன்பர்கள். இதைக் கேட்ட பெரியவா "இரண்டு கோடி ஒன்றும் அப்படி பெரியதொகையில்லையே. சுப்புலட்சுமியை கௌரவிக்க இதையும் விட சிறந்த வழி உண்டா என்ன ?" என்றாராம். யாருக்கு கிட்டும் இப்படியொரு பாக்கியம்.



< Shankar Venkataraman

Author Shankar Venkataraman, a company secretary by profession is a biographer who has brought out many books on the doyens of Carnatic music.



Maithreem Bhajatha

मैत्रीं भजत अखिलहृज्जेतीम्

Cultivate friendship which will conquer all hearts.

आत्मवदेव परानपि पश्यत।

Look upon others as thyself.

युद्धं त्यजत स्पर्धां त्यजत

Renounce war; forswear competition.

त्यजत परेष्वक्रममाक्रमणम्॥

Give up aggression on others which is wrong.

जननी पृथिवी कामदुघाऽऽस्ते

Wide Mother Earth, our Mother is here ready to give us all our desires.

जनको देवः सकल दयालुः।

We have the Lord, our Father, compassionate to all.

दाम्यत दत्त दयध्वं जनताः

Ye peoples of the world! Restrain yourselves, Give, Be Kind.

श्रेयो भूयात् सकलजनानाम्॥

May all people be happy and prosperous.



Music recital penned by The Mahaswami and rendered by Dr. M.S. Subbulakshmi before the United Nations General Assembly, New York, on Sunday, October 23, 1966 in connection with United Nations Day

Year 2015-16 (from 23.10.2015) is being celebrated as the Golden Jubilee of Maitreem Bhajatha

Maithreem Bhajata - Eternal Relevance

Asha Gopalakrishnan

This evergreen song immortalised by Smt. M. S. Subbulakshmi encapsulates in a nutshell the message of the Upanishads. It is as everyone is aware, a prayer for universal brotherhood and harmony. The song opens with a call to cultivate *maithri*, the attitude of friendship which can win over all hearts. In the Yoga-sutra of Patanjali, one is asked to consciously cultivate *maithri* as one of the attitudes for mental purification. The song continues by exhorting one to give up conflict, envy and to look upon all as oneself. Such a state of *sarvathma bhava* is understandably not easy. It requires certain amount of conscious effort and training.

As the song slowly builds up, we do find the necessary prerequisites mentioned. Towards the end of the song occur what may be termed the three 'da-s' - *daamyatha*, *datta* and *dayadhvam*. These are three cardinal tenets, taught by the Upanishads (more specifically the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad), which are of universal and eternal relevance, their ancient origins notwithstanding. These three principal virtues were initially the instruction of Prajapati. The story goes thus (Brihadaranyaka Upanishad-V.2.2).

The three-fold offspring of Prajapati, the Creator, namely Gods, men and demons completed a period of studentship. They then approached Prajapati and asked him for some specific upadesha (instruction). To the Gods, Prajapati uttered the syllable 'da'. He then asked them what they understood. They said that 'da' to them meant *daamyata*- to be moderate and to practise self-control. Prajapati was satisfied. Then the men approached him. Prajapati again uttered the syllable 'da'. The men understood it to mean *datta*- to be charitable. Next the demons approached him. They were also given the same syllable 'da'. They understood it to mean *dayadhvam*- to be compassionate.

The Gods are addicted to the pursuit of the pleasures of the sense. And so, they are asked to practise self-control. Men always aspire for more and more, being avaricious. So they are asked to perform charity in as many ways as possible. The demons are by nature cruel. So, they are asked to practise the virtue of compassion.

A second look will reveal that men themselves are distinguished into these three classes depending on their qualities, godlike or demonlike. Virtues and vices are present in varying degrees in men. It is the vices (broadly called as *asuri sampat* in the Bhagavad Gita) that impede man's personal, intellectual and spiritual growth. They stand in the way of right perception. They cloud the intellect, storm the mind and cause havoc. The Gita brings all vices under broadly three heads, namely *kama* (desire), *krodha* (anger) and *lobha* (avarice). They destroy the soul. And so, man is exhorted to free himself from these. The three 'da-s' mentioned in the Upanishad are the perfect antidote for these. These universal virtues of self-control, charity and compassion are stepping stones in the path of *shreyas*, the ultimate good of one and all as contrasted with *preyas*, that which affords temporary pleasure. Thus, the song appropriately ends with a prayer for universal *shreyas* - *SHREYO BHOYATH SAKALA JANAANAAM*.

A great and meaningful song indeed!



< Asha Gopalakrishnan

Dr. Asha Gopalakrishnan is a doctorate in Sanskrit from the University of Chennai and is on the board of Shri Adishankara Advaita Research Centre, an organisation of Kanchi Kamakoti Peetham.



Priceless Blessing

Srinivasan Kannan

Shri. Vasant Desai, a maestro, gentleman and a highly attained soul was born on 9th June, 1912.

In early 1966, Smt. M.S. Subbulakshmi (patti) was invited to perform a Carnatic music concert at the United Nations in New York.

Shri.T. Sadasivam(thatha) and patti went to Kanchipuram to seek the divine blessings of His Holiness, the Shankaracharya of Kanchi mutt. Having blessed the couple, the Mahaswami enquired if it would be possible for patti to render a Sanskrit shloka penned by the Swami. Gratefully accepting this honour, their next task was to have this shloka set to music and thatha advised Kalki Kannan(dad) to identify a suitable composer of Hindustani music who could take on this task.

Shri. Vasant Desai, whom dad met at the Rajkamal Kalamandir Studio owned by the legendary V.Shantaram, agreed to set the lyrics to music.

The composition, 'Maitreem Bhajatha', was created over a period of 3 sittings, at Meena Sadan. Not only did Shri.Desai compose the music, he also guided patti, Smt. Radha Vishwanathan(an aunt to us) and the accompaniments in the rendering of this composition.

Aunt is the embodiment of a pristine Guru-Shishya relationship. She wholeheartedly dedicated herself to playing an accompanying role to patti(her mother and Guru) and steadfastly refrained from the many opportunities of developing her own career. 'Maitreem Bhajatha' became a permanent part of patti's repertoire, as the penultimate number in all her concerts.



Maitreem Bhajatha - Magic being composed



Shri. Vasant Desai

Thatha had a cheque made and had dad deliver the same to Shri.Desai. Six months elapsed and it became evident that the cheque had not been encashed. Worried, thatha suggested that dad discreetly ascertain if Shri. Desai was unhappy with the amount and has therefore not encashed the same!

Dad went across to Shri.Desai's residence in Warden Road to seek to understand if the amount is to be revised. An emotional Shri.Desai gently held dad's hand and walked him to his music room, where the cheque was framed and placed along the various trophies that he had been bestowed with during his career.

'The privilege of setting music to the lyrics of the Mahaswami and presenting it for rendition by a living Goddess Saraswathi, in itself is a divine blessing. This cheque





is an embodiment of the sentiments. I will preserve it all my life as my greatest accomplishment', stated Shri.Desai.

The entire music fraternity and the wider group of music lovers know the accomplishments of Shri Vasant Desai. He composed some of the ever popular numbers in films such as 'Jhanak Jhanak Payal Bhaje'(1955), 'Do Aankhen Bara Haath'(1957), 'Aashirwad'(1968) , many songs for Marathi movies and a large portfolio of bhajans and other devotional songs. When one felt he was taking it easy and gradually slipping into retirement, he came with some outstanding compositions for the hit movie, 'Guddi'. The song *Bole Re Papihara* is a composition from this movie that endeared itself to all! While his brilliance as a composer, his humility as a person and his deep love for Hindustani music is well known, one got to experience the 'divine side' of this great personality.



← Srinivasan Kannan

Srinivasan Kannan is the son of Kalki Kannan, a dear family friend of the Sadasivams.



Shanmukha

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Quiz on M. S.¹

1. M. S. used to sing a chittaswaram for Tyagaraja's *Sitamma Mayamma* in Vasanta. Who composed it?
2. Who set the tune to Annamacharya's kritis, which M. S. recorded?
3. Which is the LP record to which Rajaji has given an introductory talk?
4. Who is the famous Congress leader who appears at the beginning of the movie 'Meera' and pays a tribute to M. S.?
5. There is one colour of Kanchipuram silk saree that is associated with M. S. What is it?
6. M. S. would always preface her Bowli song *Shambho Mahadeva* with a shloka. Who was the author of that shloka?
7. Before his last birthday Gandhiji wanted to hear M. S. sing *Hari tum haro*. Unfortunately she did not have the paatantharam (lyric and manner of singing) and informed him accordingly. He said that he would rather hear her say the song than someone else sing it. Overnight a music composer tuned the song at her request. Who was he?
8. Who said "Suswaralakshmi Subbulakshmi"?
9. Who is the vainika from whom M. S. learnt to play on the veena?
10. The prime time news bulletin at 9 P.M. every day in All India Radio, as it was called then, was so sacrosanct that any other programme going on beyond that time would be stopped abruptly to broadcast it. There was one exception in the case of M. S. What was the occasion?
11. Who was the Hindi film music director who approached M. S. to lead a chorus song in playback which she declined?
12. What were the pet names by which M. S. was known to elders and children?
13. Which was the most favourite raga of M. S. which she always sang in her concerts?
14. Who was the first guru of M. S.?
15. What was the occasion for the first performance of M. S. in the Music Academy?

¹The objective of the column is not only to test the knowledge of the readers but also to supplement it. They are welcome to send dissenting letters with supporting evidence, if they do not agree with the answers on page 102. It is important for keeping the record straight.



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M. S. and Family Friends

அம்மா ! எங்கும் நிறைந்தாயே இன்று எங்கு மறைந்தாயோ !!

லக்ஷ்மி கண்ணன்

'அம்மா' என்றவுடன் அம்மாவின் கருணைப்பார்வை, புன்னகைக்கும் முகம், சுருட்டக் கூந்தல், ஜொலிக்கும் தாடங்கம் மற்றும் மூக்குத்திகள் நினைவுக்கு வருது. அந்த புடவை அம்மா கட்டியதால் அழகுற்றதா? அப்படியே "என்ன வேண்டும்?" என்று நேரிலேயே தேவி காட்சி அளித்து கேட்பது போல் மெய்சிலிர்த்து. ஆதிசங்கரர் 'சௌந்தர்யலஹரி'யில் வர்ணித்த தேவி நேரடியாக M.S. அம்மா உருவத்தில் வந்து விட்டாளா? ஸ்ரீ சரஸ்வதி தேவி வீணை வாசிப்பை "சபாஷ்" என்று தேவி ரசிக்க உலகமே ஸ்தம்பித்தது என்பார்களே, அதுபோல் நம் கண்முன் நடமாடிய அம்மா அவர்களை என்ன சொல்லுவது?

பண்டிதர் முதலாக பாமரர் வரை உலகத்தின் எந்த மூலையிலும் ஒலிக்கும் சுப்ரபாதம், சஹஸ்ரநாமம் போன்றவை பக்திக்கும், ஜனரஞ்சகமான மீரா பஜன்கள் முதல் கர்நாடக சங்கீதத்தின் ஆதாரமான 72 மேளகர்த்தாக்கள்! யோசித்து பார்த்தால் ஒரே ஜன்மாவில் சாதிக்க முடியுமா?

சங்கீத பிதாமகர்களான மும்மூர்த்திகள், அன்னமாச்சாரியார், புரந்தரதாசர் போன்ற வாக்கேயகாரர்களின் சாஹித்யங்களை "கற்க கசடற" என்று கற்று தனது இனிய குரலால் அழகாக பாடி, தானும் ரசித்து, ரஸிகர் கூட்டத்தையும் ஆனந்தபட வைத்து அந்த அனுபவமே தனிதான். மும்பை நகரத்திலேயே ஸ்கூல்கள், காலேஜ், சபாக்கள், சங்கர மடம் என்று தனது சங்கீதத்தால் வளர்த்தது எவ்வளவு! பாரத தேசம் எங்கும், உலகமெங்கும் "M.S., M.S." என்று எவ்வளவு ஞாபக சின்னங்கள்! சக்தி, பெண் உருவம் எடுத்தால்தான் இது சாத்தியம்.

ஆனால் என்ன அடக்கம், எவ்வளவு எளிமை! எவ்வளவு பெரிய கூட்டத்திலும் அனைவரையும் புரிந்து கொள்வது. துளிக்கூட கர்வமின்றி தாமரை இலைத்தண்ணீராக ஜொலித்தார். எனக்கு அம்மா, குடும்பத்தில் ஒருவராகவே இருந்து பழகி என் கணவரும் "அம்மா" என்றுதான் அழைப்பார். குழந்தைகளும் "பாட்டி" என்று தான் கூப்பிடுவார்கள். அவர் அனைவருக்கும் அன்னையாகி இருந்தார் என்றால் மிகையிலலை.

தமிழில் "பாந்தம்" என்பார்கள். நவரத்தினங்கள் பதித்து அழகுற நகை செய்வது போல் எல்லாவற்றிலும் - நிற்பது, நடப்பது, அமர்வது, பேசுவது, உபசரிப்பது எல்லாமே அழகுதான்.

அழகின் அர்த்தமே M.S. அம்மாதான்!!



Lakshmi kannan and M.S. at T. Sadasivam's sashtiabhdhapoorthi



← Lakshmi Kannan

Lakshmi Kannan is the wife of Kalki Kannan and a close friend of the Sadasivams.



Memory Clips

S. Radhakrishnan

This is straight from my heart. M. S. Amma & Sadasivam mama were my god parents. I am called Ambi at home. My younger days were spent in Trivandrum where I had my primary and part of my secondary education. We were 5 siblings and all of us had the privilege of knowing and spending unforgettable times with this wonderful couple whenever they visited Trivandrum. I had a special affinity towards M. S. Amma.

In 1955, on one such visit, Sadasivam mama said to my father, "let Ambi come with us and continue his high school in Madras". So at the age of 13, I came to Kalki Gardens.

It was so fascinating right from day one. Their son Kannan Thyagarajan (fondly called Kannakutti) and I studied at MCTM school. Radha akka and Vijaya akka welcomed me as their brother. M. S. Amma was more than a mother to me. Despite her busy schedule, it was amazing to see her finding time to interact with all of us and be with us during our meal times and also whenever there was a need. It was a loving joint family at Kalki Gardens. She was extremely affectionate and good to all of us and never spoke a harsh word. In the 3 years that I lived in Kalki Gardens, not even once did a thought occur in my mind of having come away from my family. Such was her love.

Here, I would like to mention an incident which is etched in my mind. My school friends soon came to know that I was residing in Kalki Gardens. One day, some of them asked me if they could come over to have a glimpse of M. S. Amma and Sadasivam mama. I did not commit anything to them and shuddered to imagine agreeing to their request. After I reached home, I was hesitant and shy to ask M. S. Amma. She sensed that something was bothering me and asked with deep fondness if I wanted something. Without hesitation, I put forth my friends' request. Her spontaneous reply was, "*Beshaa, naalaikke azhaichundu vaa*"!! I was thrilled and brought them over the next day. She interacted with every child, sending each one of them to dizzy heights of joy! The icing on the cake for them was that she had organised delicious snacks and hot chocolate to be served to all of them. She saved the best part of everything for children.

There was something divine about Kalki Gardens. Music floated in the air throughout the day and VIPs, musicians, friends and visitors coming in every day were well received. Their hospitality and warmth was astounding. We children had no restrictions in being amidst them.

At that impressionable age, during my early teens, the exposure and experience gained during my stay with M. S. Amma and Sadasivam mama had laid a solid foundation of values and thoughts. So imbibed in me were these values that they have stood me in good stead. I often reminisce those memories with fondness and even today, they are fresh in my mind.

Two CDs, titled "Divine Unison" were released at The Music Academy in the year 2000. The recordings contained songs sung together by M. S. Amma and my father. About a month after the release of the CDs, M. S. Amma and Sadasivam Mama visited us. M. S. Amma asked my father, "*Namma sendhu paadina CD kettelaa? Rombave nanna irukku!*". My father replied, "*Naanum ketten...Romba brahmippa irundhudhu..Nee engooda paadi ennai perumai paduthitte*". M. S. Amma's response to this was just a wonderful smile. She was modesty personified!



← S. Radhakrishnan

S. Radhakrishnan is the son of the legend Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer.



My Mother's Friend

M. K. Ramesh

My mother, Mrs. Narayani Mahadevan (affectionately known as Chinnani mami) and M. S. Amma were friends for over 60 years. As we were growing up, my sister, my brother M. S. Sekhar and I have spent considerable time with M.S. Amma's family. My brother has accompanied mami in several concerts and Sadasivam mama used to jokingly call my brother as the *asthana vidwan* of Kalki Gardens.

At any given time, the Kalki Gardens household, apart from the visiting dignitaries, would have over 50 or 60 people having lunch, although mama and mami themselves were very spare eaters. It looked like a *kalyanam* everyday with mami herself personally doing the serving duties to her near and dear ones and our family was lucky to be amongst them.

Shruti and Sadakam

Discussing freely with me about her early training by her mother and how important shruti adherence was, Mami was never tired of repeating this following story no matter how many times she may have told the same:

When mami was 6 or 7, her mother (Shanmughavadivu) used to wake her up early in the morning at 5 a.m. or so and even before morning coffee would make her sit down with the shruti box and get her started with the *alankarams* and other vocal lessons. The shruti box with the bellows would be operated by her mother for about 2 to 3 minutes and her mother would go into the kitchen to start the usual cooking chores. With no one to play the bellows, Mami would continue to sing (albeit without the shruti in the background) and intermittently her mother would pop out of the kitchen to play the bellows for a couple of minutes to test whether mami was still in pitch and mami used to proudly comment that her shruti had never strayed, not even once!!

That training really stood her in good stead because we all know that throughout her career, Mami's *shruti shuddham* was impeccable. She used to lament about some of the upcoming musicians, enormously talented as she would generously acknowledge, about their unintentional indifference to the shruti aspect and their tendency, especially the female singers, to linger more on the higher octaves and not plumb the lower octaves because they would lack clarity ('due to lack of rigorous practice', she would say).

Mami used to tell my mother, "You are very friendly with these artistes. Could you not tell them this? My mother's reply to this would be, "if you, with your stature, are loathe to give advice, then what credentials do I have to tell these people?"

Mami's lament was that while people innocently and genuinely talked about her silken and gifted voice, she felt that they were not sufficiently appreciative of the effort that she had put into maintaining it with discipline and devotion. Mami felt that what she had to offer was more than just a gifted voice'. Whenever a visitor commented on how melodious her *sareeram* was or if any writer commented on her voice quality, she would say in Tamil, "How easy and trite they make it look. Little do they know how much *saadakam* and painstaking efforts I have put in to get every note and lyric right."

She once told me, "some people think that I am not capable of singing intricate pallavis or that I avoid them for fear of failure. This is far from the truth! Even





Mazhavarayanendal Subbarama Bhagavathar, who is known for his complex pallavis, has complimented me on my laya prowess and has even taught me a few.”

The incidents shared below depict how she never took her ‘vidwat’ or experience for granted and also showcase her infinite humility and incredible kindness..

Humble to the core

In the late seventies, during her visit to the U.S. (after she had earned worldwide acclaim at the United Nations concert in the late sixties), the way she prepared for the Carnegie Hall concert was astounding. We reached Carnegie Hall a full three hours before the concert. Sadasivam mama would simply not take a chance with Manhattan traffic. He insisted that we leave the house fully dressed for the concert. No question of getting dressed in Carnegie hall despite the facilities! Imagine how uncomfortable the silk saree would make her feel for almost 3 hours before the concert! After reaching the venue, mami would tune the instrument (my wife played the tanpura for the concert) and would be extremely nervous as to how the concert would shape up and about how the western audience would react. She was over sixty then and had won all national honours (except the Bharath Ratna) besides the international honours at the UN plus other awards. But to her, every concert was not only an *arpanam* to the Almighty but to the audience as well. She used to meticulously go over the items with Radha. To a layperson watching this scene, this would seem like an unnecessary exercise and would perhaps make them wonder about the artiste’s confidence level! She would turn around during this tuning process to ask us whether it sounded alright! That was M.S. Amma - no pride or complacency despite all her experience and fame!

A caring heart

In the 60s, Amma had a concert in Chembur. I had driven Mami’s accompanists to the concert from Sion where they were staying with Kalki Kannan. Kannan drove mami, mama and Radha to the concert. The concert was held in a *pandal* specially erected for the concert. Mami had just started her concert when there was a short circuit in one of the tube lights attached to one of the wooden poles. As the *pandal* was made of cloth, it suddenly caught fire and understandably, there was a huge commotion. As I had parked my car on the grounds just behind the *shamiana*, we literally rushed Mami to my car and whisked her away. Mami’s singular concern despite this nasty scare, was for the *janangal* (people) who had thronged the *pandal*. “*Aiyyo! evvalavu aasai oda pattu ketka vanderukka, ippidi asambavitam nadanduduthe*” (for the people who have come to the concert eagerly, why did this unfortunate incident happen?). It was a small fire which was then put out and the concert resumed after a small delay. Needless to say, Mami sang her heart out! Despite the most adverse situation she was in, her thoughts were first for the common man! There was not a mean bone in that great lady’s body!

Best friends for 60 years

Every year on M.S. Amma’s birthday, my mother would be the first one to call her in the morning and wish her before anybody else could call her. My mother was in the habit of getting up at 4 a.m. for her morning coffee - a practice that she did not relinquish till her demise!

This would be followed by a visit to Kotturpuram with *badam cake* (which my mother was an expert at making). Mami, because of her diabetes condition, would take





only a small portion of the cake. Then, the throngs of well wishers and friends would come and Mami would be simply overwhelmed by the affection and goodwill but would quickly recover her poise to ask pertinent questions about their families and their welfare in such detail that it would make the visitors wonder how such a celebrity could with such genuineness and sincerity remember the minute details their families!

My mother and mami were best friends for over 60 years. My mother till her dying day lamented her friend's loss. She could recall with remarkable clarity every aspect of her association with M.S. Amma although she may not have been able to recite the names of her 15 great grandchildren!

Mama and mami used to visit my parents in R.A. Puram, Chennai in the 80s/ 90s quite frequently. In 1992, when I was visiting India from the U.S., Sadasivam mama asked one day, "Kunjamma, you may recall we met Chinnani and Mahadevan in Calcutta in 1942 (for the 'Savithri' film shooting) and this will be your 50th year of association with your friend. Should we not celebrate the event?" Immediately we all sprung into action and at short notice arranged for an intimate get together with Radha and Vijaya along with their spouses besides Athma. We had ordered a cake with the inscription, 'Celebrating 50 years of friendship' with both their names - Kunjamma and Chinnani. But the bakery mistakenly wrote 60 instead of 50 and mama remarked to my mother and mami, "so you both better live another 10 years!" Mama died 5 years later and mami died 12 years later. Mama's prophecy was fulfilled!

M.S. mami was truly a divine personality and every description about her nobility, dignity, humility and divinity would still fall far short of the truth! Perhaps, a few decades from now, when people read accounts of mami and mama, they may even refuse to believe that there could have lived such paragons of compassion, generosity and sensitivity!



← M. K. Ramesh

M. K. Ramasubramanian alias Ramesh is the son of Late K. S. Mahadevan - Hon. Secretary of Shanmukhananda Sabha as well as the first Editor of 'Shanmukha' and Smt. Narayani Mahadevan.

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M. S. Mami - Fond memories of a grateful family friend

M. S. Sekhar

My first contact with M. S. mami and Sadasivam mama dates back right to my birth in August, 1948. My mother 'Chinnani mami' as she was fondly called by the Sadasivams, told me that since M. S. Amma happened to be in Madurai at that time, she came to see the baby.

Composing music for 'Maithreem Bhajatha'

In the early 60s, mami had come to Bombay for the composing of 'Maithreem Bhajatha', the song she was supposed to render in the U. N. concert in 1966.

Vasanth Desai was the music director and I consider myself extremely fortunate to have been present during some of the composing sessions. I was asked to keep 'talam' with the use of the cymbals. Later, no concert of mami's would be complete without her singing this iconic song where she played the cymbals herself! Desai composed the song stanza by stanza and I remember everyone being astounded by mami's sharpness and the alacrity with which she absorbed and internalised the tune. She would then render it back with a lot more impact than what possibly even Vasanth Desai thought was possible! Initially, they would sing together so that she could familiarise herself with the tune and at one point, she was rendering it so perfectly that Vasanth Desai stopped singing and said in Hindi, "aap gaayiyee!" He was extremely moved by the tonal quality, the 'bhava' and the 'bhakti' that mami brought out in that song. No wonder then that this song continues to reverberate in the ears and hearts of everyone even today! This was an exceptional experience that happened in my life! I learnt later that Vasanth Desai refused to accept fees for composing this song and when he was coerced, he made M. S. amma sign her autograph on a 100 rupee note and accepted only that as his 'fee'!

Such was the reverence that renowned composer Desai had for mami's ability in the short time that he interacted with her.

Playing for mami in her concerts

I have had the fortune of accompanying mami for a few concerts as her mridangam player. Generally, only professionals would accompany her but I was the 'stepney' in case, any of the mridangists were not free. Sadasivam mama would say, "Let us call the 'asthana vidwan' of Kalki Gardens!"

When the City Union Bank, Kumbakonam, celebrated its 75th year, mama, mami, Smt. Gowri and all the rest of us travelled by road from Chennai to give a concert there. Travel with mama and mami was always a lot of fun. They always took very good care of the accompanying artistes and all the artistes who have played for mami will vouchsafe for her warm hospitality, courtesy, grace and kindness.

There were a lot of artistes who would accompany her - violin, mridangam, ghatam and kanjira and each of them obviously possessed abilities in varying degrees. Mami would always be very gracious and considerate of this and even if on a day, an artiste was not in full flow, she would always carry all of them along. She would never pit one against the other and expose them on stage.

That is why they would always enjoy the experience of playing for her. Plus, while on stage, due to the proximity, you could hear her voice in all its glory and could appreciate the intricacies in the 'sangatis' without any acoustic interference or other noise. One also got to observe how she could give subtle signals to either Radha or





the other accompanists. So one had to be sharp and on their toes while playing for her.

I was never apprehensive about playing for her as I was very familiar with her way of singing and the little training I had under T. K. Murthy mama also helped. She was never critical and was always encouraging and appreciative of everyone's effort. If anything, I would always feel that she was so diplomatic and kind that I could never get a frank appraisal of my ability! Her '*kala pramaana shudhdham*' was extremely strong and you could play fearlessly. In fact, T. K. Murthy mama used to say that the two artistes for whom one could play without worrying about '*kala pramaana*' glitches were Chembai Vaidyanatha Bhagavathar and M. S. Subbulakshmi! I have experienced this laya strength and crispness that she had while playing for her. In my opinion, either you are born with that impeccable skill and if not, then even if you practise hard, you can only mask some of the mistakes and can be a little more controlled. For mami, her sense of rhythm was a natural gift - '*amaindadu*' as they say in Tamil, like it was for laya maestro, Palghat Mani Iyer. I had stopped playing in concerts and repeatedly, mami would always keep urging me to continue my pursuit. So the experience of playing for mami was unfailingly enjoyable and always a live lesson in music.

Sathya Sai Baba and mami

Everyone knows that mami became a devotee of Sathya Sai Baba and that he would visit her house in Kotturpuram. Without realising the futuristic impact of my action, I played a small role in connecting M. S. Amma and Kalki Gardens with Baba and I wish to share a deeply personal experience here on this occasion.



M. S. serving food to Sathya Sai Baba

When I came to Chennai to do my Chartered Accountancy, Sadasivam mama who had arranged for my article internship, insisted that I stay in Kalki Gardens.

I, however, wanted to experience the freedom of living in a hostel and didn't want to impose on them. Later, when I had to vacate the hostel during the final 9 months, mama simply put his foot down and insisted that I come and stay with them. I was given a room in the 'outhouse' in the Kalki garden complex which I shared along with 'kannakutty'.



M. S. with Chinnani mami, Sekhar and Kannakutty



Right from my school days, I used to always carry a photo of Baba which I had brought along with me to Chennai. When I moved in, I told mami that my photo needed a space in her pooja room so that I could tell my prayers. I discussed with her the ramifications of what I thought could be a sensitive subject as everyone in the Kalki Gardens fold followed the Paramacharya staunchly, especially Sadasivam mama. Mami assured me that nobody would interfere and she said that in case anyone asked, then, the answer would be that it was simply the case of someone saying their prayers to their Guru. Sadasivam mama would come in to say his prayers but not once did he question me about that photo. That was the greatness of Sadasivam mama! While he was very staunch in his obeisance to Paramacharya, he allowed others the freedom to have their own faith and beliefs.

Mami as a judge

I would like to share here the interesting experience during the period when mami was the 'Sangita Kalanidhi'. In the Academy, the 'Sangita Kalanidhi' had to also officiate as a judge in a panel of 3, the other two being independent judges, to choose the winners in the competitions, both vocal as well as instrumental. So the panel had to listen to the various competitors in each category and mark them.

Later, when they collated the marks awarded by each judge, they found that one judge had uniformly awarded high marks to all the contestants. So the decision to award prizes finally hinged on the differential rating of the other two judges. No prizes for guessing who gave high marks!!

When she narrated this to me, I laughed and asked, "Mami, why did you do that? You could have easily discerned each person's talent and merit and awarded marks accordingly. She replied, "No! No! If I had given low marks, they may think that this M. S. thinks too highly of herself and that's why I have put them down. I do not want anyone to ever think that I was harsh and judgemental because of my fame and popularity! So, I decided to uniformly give high marks!"

"But mami, people may get an erroneous and aggrandised version of their talent due to your high marks.", I protested.

Her calm reply was, "They are all talented young people and they need to be encouraged. Let the other two judges decide whom to award the prizes!"

This incident is very typical of mami's '*svabhavam*' of not wanting to hurt even a fly!! She had decided to overlook the criticism that she may have had to face regarding her effective judging skills and had placed value on encouraging the participants. She decided never to cause anguish, particularly in music, and more so, because of her standing in the industry! Rare to find such an exemplary human being!!

Aiyappan Bhajanai

Our family members would go to '*Sabarimalai*' every year. We had the fortune of mami coming over when we had the *Aiyappan bhajanais* at our house. We had a bhajan group consisting of just family members and some amateurs. These songs were written by our Guru, Shri. Sadashiva Brahmendra, and we would render these songs with a lot of '*bhaktibhavam*' and fervour.



M. S. participating in the Aiyappan Bhajanai at M. S. Sekhar's house





Usually, mami would also sing one or two of her popular songs. She would never fuss or have any qualms about singing with just a shruti box or sometimes even without that. She usually sang unaccompanied on these occasions. The spirit and atmosphere of spiritual fervour and bhakti present in the bhajanai combined with the effect that her voice, full of purity, piety and power created was just magical and would engulf and transport everybody. On one occasion, she sang '*katriniley varum geetam*', which was a favourite of my Guruswami and as she finished her rendition with the final '*katriniley*', in the higher octave, he went into a trance. On another occasion, when she sang '*shambho mahadeva*', another devotee slipped into a trance and burst out "*kalatheeshwaraa sharanam*"!

Such was the electrifying effect her music had and she could bring about that with just one song! These were really personal, deeply emotional, highly unique and unforgettable occasions treasured and cherished by our family and we as a family missed it deeply when M. S. Amma stopped singing.

Sadasivam mama

When the couple lived in Nungambakkam, their small drawing room used to be adorned with portraits of various celebrities like Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Rajaji, Tagore, Ramakrishna Paramahansa etc. One day, when I visited them, I found a small photograph of a young boy amidst all the others. I did not know who this young boy was and could not understand why his photo occupied such an important place among all the stalwarts.

When I questioned mama about this, he being an excellent raconteur told the following story:

That boy hailed from Eranakulam. His father had died very early and his mother, a young widow, had to take care of herself and her children. Their only asset was the property they lived in and that too had been mortgaged to the bank. The bank was planning to enforce the mortgage and repossess the property, which would have rendered the family homeless. They had written to mama narrating their plight and had sought his help.

In the meanwhile, a sangeetha sabha in Eranakulam had been trying to arrange a concert of mami's for a long time. Mama found out the exact amount that this needy family owed the bank and then told the sabha that mami would perform provided the sabha could arrange for that debt to be paid off. Thus, the family got their home back.

This boy, then educated himself and moved to the Middle East for a job. Many years later, mama was collecting funds for a *vedapatashala* run by the Kanchi Matam. This boy, when he heard about it, came forward and made a remittance for the cause despite his family's humble financial condition. Mama was deeply touched by this boy's gesture where, to express his gratitude, the boy had definitely stretched himself for a cause that mama believed in.

So mama decided that his boy was no less a hero and that his photo deserved to nestle amongst the photos of other celebrities! That was the greatness of Sadasivam mama - for him, the conduct and the attitude was far more important than the status of an individual and he never shied away from giving recognition to those that have touched his heart!





Mama's role in my career

From the time I completed my graduation and moved to Chennai for my CA, Sadasivam mama had played a very crucial role right from my admission for CA, organising hostel accommodation for me and securing my industrial apprenticeship with EID Parry. In those days, it was very difficult to get an articleship in a reputed firm.

You had to do some audit service for a while, sometimes even up to 2 years and only then an articleship could be secured. The firm I had chosen was M. K. Dandekar and company. Even before my results were out, Mama simply wrote a letter to N. M. Dandekar who was from the Swatantra Party and was the brother of M. K. Dandekar requesting that I should be made an article clerk directly.

So, I walked into the firm directly like "an MLA who had got elected to the Assembly!!" to use the words of comedian Thangavelu. I wanted to stay at the YMIA hostel where there usually was a waiting period of 2 years to secure a room. When mama came to know that, he placed a call to his friend Chitra Narayanaswamy, the President of YMIA and simply demanded that I be given a room.

In those days, article clerks had the option of doing industrial training for a period of 6 months at the end of the CA program. EID Parry was one of the few reputed companies that took trainees for this purpose. But, they took only two or three trainees for this purpose and it was a very coveted job. The Finance Director of the company, Mr. R. N. Ratnam was an extremely close friend of mama. Once again, mama simply made a phone call and told Ratnam that he was sending me and that I should join as a trainee. Everyday, a five course lunch would be sent to the office from Kalki Gardens, so that I got to relish home cooked food!!

When I got my first stipend of Rs. 200, he ordered me to go to Tirupathi climbing the hill and told me to put that money in Balaji's *undiya*. I simply obeyed. Those values that he inculcated in me then, have stood me in good stead through my life and career.

Later, when I chose to go to Calcutta to pursue an MBA degree, he teased me saying, "Look! Sekhar has decided to retire pursuing his studies! That's why he is doing something after his CA." Those days, finishing CA was considered as the high point in a person's professional studies and it was very uncommon for someone to be pursuing an academic endeavour after that!

He always took deep interest in me and my career and was unfailingly affectionate towards me.

Thus, due to mama's generosity and kindness, many hurdles were crossed and my life was made easy and comfortable and I consider myself truly lucky to have had the opportunity to interact with him and be a recipient of his kindness and guidance.

Case study in Self confidence

Mama, when he was young and unemployed, had an interview with 'Ananda Vikatan', the popular Tamil magazine. He was so poor then that he had no money to even travel to Chennai. Some kind person came forward and bought him the ticket and also gave him a couple of rupees more for expenses. He got selected in the interview and the interviewer told him that he would be given a salary of Rs. 50 per month for a probationary period of six months. Thereafter, if they found him good and if they decided to retain him, the salary then would go up to Rs. 75 per month.





Normally, one would expect that a person who had such a financial strain would have jumped at the offer. But mama was a firebrand! He told the interviewer to give him the same Rs. 75 to him right away but with a probationary period of 3 months. The interviewer did the math quickly and figured that for a period of 3 months, the sum was only Rs.225 as against the earlier offer of Rs.300 and he had the freedom of sacking him if he was found unsatisfactory. He immediately agreed and made the offer. Such was his self confidence! I have referred to this incident many times in management forums as an excellent case study to showcase self confidence.

'One of a kind' man

Mama used to savour all the sweets and savouries that my wife, Girija, used to make. So very often, to drive home the fact that she was the better half, he would mischievously call me 'Girijan' - husband of Girija!!

He was extremely affectionate towards our family and was deeply fond of my brother Ramesh and me. In fact, when we went to invite them with my brother's son's wedding invitation, even before we could voice our request, he simply said, "Kunjamma, you are going to sing at the reception!"

When mama was in the ICU, just 2 days before his demise, we had gone to see him. We were not allowed inside and had to see him through the glass window. The moment he noticed us, he promptly gesticulated to my wife that he would eat whatever she had brought with her after two days. Alas! He did not live to eat her food ever again.

So even in his deathbed, his poise, sense of humour, dignity and inner strength that characterised his personality remained intact. I will always remember mama for his aggressive drive, his brisk and no-nonsense demeanour, his robust positivity, his deeply affectionate nature and rare honesty and integrity and will always treasure his affection, guidance and insight.

I can only thank my mother for having a friend like M. S. Amma due to which we were lucky and blessed to have had the opportunity to interact with them for over 50 years!



Chinnani maami with M.S.Radha and Vijaya



◀ M. S. Sekhar

M. S. Sekhar is the son of Late K. S. Mahadevan - Hon. Secretary of Shanmukhananda Sabha as well as the first Editor of 'Shanmukha' and Smt. Narayani Mahadevan.



Bhakti, Beauty, Bliss

Srinivasan Kannan

A cousin, V. Srinivasan (Cheenu), son of Radha aunty, was in Dubai with his family, in January, 2015. His talented daughter, Aishwarya, regaled a large audience at the Indian Consulate auditorium, with some scintillating compositions of Sri Tyagaraja. We also got to reminisce the good old days with patti and he had an interesting experience to share...

Many years back, patti had performed with Radha aunty at Thiruvaiyaru. The concert had stretched very late into the evening. At the completion of her performance, she, thatha and Radha aunty were escorted to their vehicle. Cheenu walked a few step behind them. "It initially started with a few fans coming to patti and prostrating in front of her to seek her blessings. This triggered a surge of more 'bhaktas' wanting to avail of her grace and soon things started getting a little chaotic. The police moved in to provide a protective ring around them. Many of those who followed, particularly the aged, could not break through the cordon to seek patti's grace. What I saw subsequently, makes me emotional even today. An ardent group, that was denied proximity to patti, bent down and picked fistfuls of the sand that she had walked on, in order to carry back as her blessings", he shared. "Patti was completely overwhelmed by what she saw and her eyes welled up. Thatha too was numb with disbelief." he concluded.

This brings to my mind a similar incident that had happened in Bombay...

Patti performed at the Shanmukhananda Hall, in Bombay, for a benefit recital for Sankara Nethralaya. A sell out audience was treated to a spectacular performance for almost four hours. As she was into the last stanza of 'Maitreem Bhajatha', her penultimate number, a restive part of the audience gradually progressed on to the stage. Sensing a 'build up' around her, a batch of security personnel moved to restrict their access to her. A large group, however, managed to evade the security ring. Many prostrated at her feet. It was a moving sight with ardent fans of all ages, including elders, seeking her 'divine grace'. Many were emotionally moved and some were in tears while others were in a state of joy! None of us had the will to block them from patti. For her part, patti clasped her palms and bent down to express her gratefulness! Back home, everyone, patti, thatha, Radha aunty, mom, dad, Cheenu, Indu..... all of us remained submerged in that divine experience. Patti walked upto thatha and prostrated at his feet saying, "I owe all that I have experienced to you" amongst other things. "She did the same after the Thiruvaiyaru experience too", Cheenu added.

I now think of all the liberties that we had taken with her. I would often tease her, saying "Patti, you are the most beautiful woman in the world!" I did this just to see her blush and she invariably would, always!

She, despite being away from us for this long, continues to mesmerise, trigger emotions, provide serenity and enable a state of bliss!

Taken from Srinivasan Kannan's post in the 'Kalki' Kannan page on Facebook.



◀ Srinivasan Kannan

Srinivasan Kannan is the son of Kalki Kannan, a close friend of the Sadasivams.



Least Known facts about M. S.



1. Her father called her **Rajathippa** (princess darling). Mother called her **Kunjamma**.
2. M.S. was also a trained Bharatanatyam artiste.
3. Formal schooling only till 5th grade. But the sheer merit of her music conferred Doctorate from several universities on her.
4. Her grandmother Akkammal was a violinist.
5. At the age of 10, she cut the first disc. The song recorded was 'Marakata Vadivu' in Kambhoji raga, a song in praise of Madurai Meenakshi.
6. She had once played the violin for Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer.
7. She was a competent mridangam artiste. She learnt from her brother Sakthivel.
8. The great Vidwan Chembai had accompanied her on the violin once.
9. M.S. was a great lover of Chukku Coffee, French Perfume and Jasmine Flower (Madurai Malli).
10. Her house was named Shivam - Shubam.





11. Shankarabharanam was her favourite raga. Blue was her favourite colour.
12. Never ate ice-creams, avoided cold drinks to protect her voice.
13. She is the only singer to have a colour named after her – M.S. Blue.
14. Her sarees were woven specially by Kancheepuram Muthu Chettiyar, an ardent fan.
15. Hearing M.S. sing Shankarabharanam during the Vikramaditya music festival in Bombay in 1943, Pandit Omkarnath Thakur unabashedly stepped on to the stage midway through the concert and felicitated her.
16. Her song *Katrinile Varum Gitam* (the melody wafting through the breeze) is based on a song sung by the Bengali singer Juthika Ray.
17. During the shooting of 'Meera', M.S. had a providential escape from drowning in the Yamuna. The scene depicted Meera drowning and Lord Krishna saving her. It was the same divine force that saved M.S.





18. In her singing career spanning 7 decades, she acted in 5 movies
- Sevasadanam (Tamil)- 1938
 - Shakuntalai (Tamil) - 1940*
 - Savithri (Tamil) - 1941
 - Meera (Tamil) - 1945
 - Meerabai (Hindi) - 1947
- * acted along with Shri. G. N. Balasubramaniam (GNB)
19. From 1952, M.S. performed in Rama Seva Mandali, Bangalore for 31 times. It was quite co-incidental that every time she performed it poured heavily but could the packed hall care?
20. M.S. stopped singing after her husband's death in 1997.
21. M.S. breathed her last on the same day (11th December) in 2004 as Smt. Radha Vishwanathan's birth on the same day in 1934.
22. A Commemorative postage stamp was issued on her on 18.12.2005 by the Dept. of Posts, Government of India.





Quotable Quotes

“ Kuzhanthai (child), you are carrying a veena in your throat.”

- Karaikudi Sambasiva Iyer



“ You sing like an angel !”

- Helen Keller (Blind, Deaf and Dumb)

“ Kunjamma, you must leave some awards for others!”

- Rukmini Devi Arundale



“ Suswaralakshmi Subbulakshmi ”
(Goddess of perfect tone and auspiciousness)

- Bade Ghulam Ali Khan

“ I need no more words to commend her will take her to your hearts, you will cherish her. You will be proud that India in this generation has produced so supreme an artiste. And I am sure that whoever hears this wonderful voice, whoever watches the gestures of this wonderful artiste, whoever comes under the enchantment of her great gifts will agree with me that she is not an interpreter of Meera but Meera herself.”

- Rukmini Devi Arundale



“ I am but a Prime Minister, but Srimathi Subbulakshmi is a Queen, She is the Queen of Song, She is the Queen of Art”

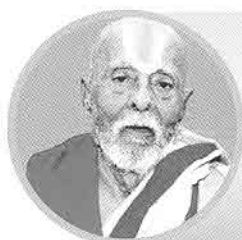
- Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru



“ I feel like the poor father who sent his daughter to her husband's house in black beads and glass bangles but watched her return in a dazzle of silk and gems. Kunjamma transformed the composition because she did not merely embellish, but entered its soul.”



- Mysore Vasudevachar on his composition 'Brochevarevarura' sung by MS



“ Her Vak Suddham (Lucid enunciation) matches her Sruti Suddham (fidelity to pitch)”

- Agnihotram Thatachariar

“ Whatever she is, she is like Brindavan Tulasi”

- Mahaswami of Kanchi

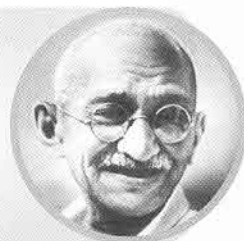


“ M.S. did not act, she became Meera herself”

- Ellis Dungan

“ She loses herself in Bhajans. To sing a bhajan is one thing, to sing it by losing oneself in God is quite different”

- Mahatma Gandhi





Voice of the Century

“ Mere voice does not confer Vidwath. To imbibe it with Bhakti and associate with Bhava of Sahitya and Sangeetha with a will to promote the intellectual standard of rendition, that makes a difference. That is why she stands out from the rest. ”



- T. T. Krishnamachari



“ Many people are under a wrong impression that Subbulakshmi attained fame because of my contacts. This is wrong. She has come up by her own formidable talent. ”

- T. Sadasivam

The New York Times

“ Subbulakshmi's songs of India brings excitement to the Town Hall – her vocal communication transcends words...
.....Subbulakshmi and her ensemble are a revelation to western ears. ”

“ Kunjamma calls herself my disciple, but she is more than that. ”

- Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer



“ Her music is a Gift of God that she placed at the service of the nation ”

- Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan





“ I rediscovered my lost soul on hearing her music.”

- Govind Vallabh Pant



“ Tapaswini (The Renunciate) ”

- Bharat Ratna Dr. Lata Mangeshkar

“ She incandesced as she sang. Her singing voice employed more than the process of phonation, more than the scope of the larynx.”

- Gopal Krishna Gandhi
Former Governor of West Bengal



“ Such was her way of intoning “Bhikshamdehi” of Annapoomnashtakam that I was reminded of what I should do for Music academy.”

- G. D. Birla

“ A classical musician’s appeal is to the limited view, but the great mass of people turn away from him. On the other hand a popular star may have a fantastic following amongst the masses but may be anathema to the pundits. Subbulakshmi’s reputation cuts right across such musical boundaries. This is not mere versatility. It is a measure of the range of her talent. She can satisfy the exacting demands of a Mylapore (Madras) audience as well as those of mammoth gatherings in Delhi or Jullundhur. She could move a master like the late Ustad Alladia Khan with her Ppantuvarali, and I have heard her sing *Yad Ave* (with no accompaniments) to a group of little children and move them to want to sing the songs themselves.”

- Dr. V. K. Narayana Menon
Sangeet Natak Academy





Answers to Quiz on M. S.

1. Karaikkudi Sambasiva Iyer (according to his disciple Devakottai Veenai Narayana Iyengar).
2. Nedunuri Krishnamurti
3. Bhaja Govindam
4. Smt. Sarojini Naidu
5. It is known as M. S. Blue due to the popularity of the saree in that colour worn by her.
6. Appayya Dikshitar
7. Dilip Kumar Roy Choudhury of Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry (now Puducherry). He recorded the song and sent it to M.S within a day of her request.
8. Ustad Bade Ghulam Ali Khan
9. K. S. Narayanaswamy. Both played the veenai during the morning lecture-demonstration session of the Music Academy during the music festival in 1968-69 when she became the Sangita Kalanidhi.
10. It was during the December music festival in the 1960s when M. S. was singing at the Tamil Isai Sangam, Madras. Her singing of *Jagadodharana* started just a few minutes before 9 P.M. and it continued to be on the air along with the remaining tukkadas till the end of the concert cancelling the news bulletin - perhaps the first and the last time AIR did it. AIR knew how listeners would be furious if the concert was interrupted. Those were the days when those in charge of AIR broadcasts were knowledgeable.
11. Jaidev approached M. S. to sing *Allah tero naam* for the movie 'Hum Dono' of Dev Anand. Later Lata Mangeshkar agreed to do it and it became a best-selling record.
12. Kunjamma and Ammupatti.
13. Shankarabharanam
14. Her mother Shanmukhavadiyu and later she had formal training under Srinivasa Iyengar of Madurai.
15. Music Academy invited her to sing on 1st January, 1932 in the place of Ariyakkudi Ramanuja Iyengar, who had cancelled his concert.

Scores (one mark for each correct answer)

Less than 6: Hope is eternal! Start on sarali varisai.

6-10: Good progress! Fit to learn varnam.

11-15: Congratulations! Proceed to Ragam, Tanam and Pallavi.

M. S. and Admirers

Radiating Divine Music

Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam

Womanhood is a beautiful creation of God. I am always inspired by two women. One is my mother and the other mother is "Mother of Music" – the great M. S. Subbulakshmi.

First time in the year 1950, I heard her, when I was studying in the college at Trichy during Thyagaraja festival at Thiruvaiyar, which is conducted in January every year. I attended this festival with my close friend and music lover Santhanam. M. S. Subbulakshmi sang the famous Thyagaraja Pancharatna Kriti *Endaro Mahaanubhuvulu Andhariki Vandhanamulu*. This song really entered into me and blossomed happiness in my body and soul. The meaning was so powerful; I was moved and became a lifetime fan of M.S. I started liking her statement in the Music Academy, linking music with Bhakti.

"Bhakti is nothing but the devotion we show to the divinity that resides within us. Once we regard the divinity within us with devotional fervour, we are bound to develop the same affection towards everything outside. The reason is that the same divine truth runs through all things. When the devotee has attained this state, service to the world becomes his creed".

I used to meet her in music concerts. It was a great joy for me when M.S. was honoured with Bharat Ratna in 1998 at Ashoka Hall in Rashtrapati Bhavan. I was sitting by her side. She touched my head and blessed. That was "the greatest moment" in my life. She gave one statement which I would like to recall, "Any Raga has the purpose of directing the minds of the listeners towards God and his manifestations....." Long live M. S. !



◀ *Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam*

Extract of Dr. Avul Pakir Jainulabdeen Abdul Kalam (President of India)'s address at the Avinashilingam University for Women, Coimbatore on 19-12-2006.

WRITE TO US!

We would love to get to know you, dear reader, and hear your views, suggestions and thoughts on the journal or any topic related to the performing arts.

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Mumbai - 400 022 ● Tel. : 022 - 2401 3207



Tamil Poem

Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam

யாழிசையில் பிறந்த இறையிசை வானுலகிலும் இசையாய் இருப்பாய்

யாழிசையில் பிறந்த ஏழிசைக் கீதம் நீ
உன்னிசைக் கொடுத்ததோ அமைதியும் இனிமையும்
இசைச்செல்வத்தோடு பொருட்செல்வத்தையும்
எல்லோருக்கும் அள்ளி அள்ளிக் கொடுத்தாய்
மானிடக்குரலின் மகத்துவத்தை இறைவனும் வியந்திட வாய்ப்புமளித்தாய்

ஆயிரமாயிரம் மானிடரெல்லாம் உன் காவியக் கருணையில்
நனைந்து மகிழ்ந்தோம்
செவியில் செல்வம் மனதில் மகிழ்ச்சி நெஞ்சில் நெகிழ்ச்சி அள்ளிவழங்கிய
உன் சங்கீதக்குரலின் இனியநாதத்தில் கொழித்துமகிழ்ந்தது
எங்கள் உள்ளம்

வசந்தபருவமாய் யாழிசைகீதமாய் எண்பதுஆண்டாய் இதயங்கவர்ந்த
ஏழிசைநாதம் நீ நிறைவற்றாலும் எம் நெஞ்சமெல்லாமும் நிறைந்தாய்

மத்தியமாவதியில் மாலைகள் சூடிய மங்கையர் திலகம்
பூநீராகத்தில் சிறப்புகள் செய்து பக்திகீதத்தில் சாதனை படைத்த பாரதரத்னம்
தான்சேன் கானத்தை நாங்கள் உணர்ந்திட காலந்தந்திட்ட மாபெரும்கொடைநீ
அன்னமாச்சாரியார் புரந்தரதாசர் அற்புதம் படைத்திட்ட ஏழிசைமூவர்
உள்ளங்கவர்ந்த தமிழிசையெல்லாம் உன்குரலாலே உயிர்பெற்று மலர்

வாரிவழங்கிய வள்ளலாறுபோல காலக்கடலில் நீ கலந்துவிட்டாலும்
நீ போற்றிவளர்த்த இசைப்பயிர் எம் உள்ளம், உடல், உதிரத்தில் கலந்து
காலங்காலமாய் உயிர்பெற்று வளம்பெற்று உலகத்தில் வாழும்
இசைக்கு இசைகொடுத்தநீ இவ்வுலகைநீங்கி இறையுலகு ஏகினாலும்
கோடிகோடி உள்ளத்தில் உணர்வாய் வாழ்ந்தநீ வானுலகிலும் இசையாய் இருப்பாய்

12.12.2004

ஆ.ப.ஜெ.அய்யா கலாம்

(தீருமதி எம்.எஸ். சுப்புலட்சுமி அவர்களுக்கு
காணிக்கையாக விமானத்தில் எழுதிய கவிதை)

The Golden Voice

N. Hariharan

M. S. Subbulakshmi was born with a golden voice which enthralled millions. Sweet melody poured out from her voice which captivated the lay listener and the connoisseur alike. Small wonder then that she established rapport with the audience instantly. The spiritual chord in her persona cast a spell at any venue.

I listened to the music of M. S. for the first time at the marriage celebration of my English professor, Mr. G. Gopalakrishnan's daughter. In the big hall of his residence in Pattom, Trivandrum, a hundred odd invitees had gathered to savour the sweet strains of a charming 17 year old M. S. It was in the year 1933. As a 11 year old boy, I remember seeing M. S. with her mother Shanmugavadivu, a veena artiste, by her side, besides the highly respected music patron G. P. Sekhar along with a violinist and a mridangam percussionist at either side. The singer was of slim build with long hair and a charming face. Every minute of the concert was enjoyed by the invited audience that gave a loud applause at the end. Professor Gopalakrishnan presented a coconut, bananas, a *mallika* garland along with a hundred rupee currency note on the top to the artiste on a silver plate. The accompanists too were honoured similarly with coin filled envelopes.

G. P. Sekhar announced that he had arranged a veena concert by Shanmugavadivu the next day in the evening at his spacious mansion and invited everybody to attend. That experience spurred me to go to musical events, mostly in temples. Our classical arts are rooted in spirituality and they thrived those days with the support of temples and art patron nobles and Maharajas.

Shanmugavadivu asked the President of a 'Ramanavami' fete, film maker Sri K. Subramaniam, (the father of dance exponent Padma Subramaniam) to give a chance to her daughter, 'Kunja' (nick name of M. S.). He replied that senior artistes had already been fixed and promised that he would try in case someone cancelled. Subramaniam gave a chance to 'Kunja'. The listeners were stunned at the aesthetics and the golden voice of a young girl. She became the talk of the town.

K. Subramaniam then thought of giving film roles to M. S. But she secretly quit the Madurai house to meet a film maker in Madras, who then took her to Sadasivam. It was love at first sight for Sadasivam. A heroine's role, with singer G. N. Balasubramanian as the male lead, came to her at the insistence of the financier of the film. Producer Sadasivam was hesitant, fearing whether G.N.B. may entice her. And it did happen that way and only family pressure made G.N.B. retrace his steps.

Her husband Sadasivam's high powered public relations, made M. S. an artiste of international fame. She participated in the Edinburgh festival because of his efforts. He meticulously planned the repertoire for each of her concerts. She feared him so much that she would not make any change. Jokingly, the celebrity editor of The Indian Express and her authentic biographer Mr T. J. S. George would say that M. S. sang only '*Sadashivam gharana*' after he took charge of her life.

Shri C. Rajagopalachari (C. R.) had also done a lot to help M. S. He recommended M. S. to his highly placed friends and promoted her.

C.R. was the Viceroy and Governor General in the interim period till the transfer of power by the British. Sadasivam was an activist of the Swatantra Party launched by C.R. The Tamil song '*Kurai ondrum illai*' which he composed, has been sung by her in numerous concerts. Mr. C. V. Narasimhan, UN executive, chef de cabinet and a music lover was a very good friend of C.R. and that is how M. S. got an opportunity to give a concert at the UN.





Sadasivam and M. S. were extremely generous, perhaps to a fault, considering the financial distress they faced later in life. Hospitality to visiting musicians was dear to M. S., irrespective of seniority or status. Around 40 visitors would take lunch at their house every day. She would insist that every visitor eat lunch before taking leave.

She had once gladly given away a birthday gift of a pair of gold bangles at the wish of her husband. She was generous and helpful to accompanists.

M. S. built up her repertoire by learning from great vidwans like Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer and K. S. Narayanaswami. She learnt particular items from veteran performers in many languages thus acquiring diversity and she meticulously cultivated precision in pronunciation.

I have attended numerous concerts and met her back stage to state my appreciation. "It is all God's grace", she always used to say with deep humility. Years later, she would say "*Mahaperiyaval arul*". She was a deep devotee of the Paramacharya. Her deep faith in him restored her lost voice before her concert at the United Nations where she sang '*Maithreem Bhajatha*', the Sanskrit composition penned by the Kanchi seer for world peace.

Once, she gave an open air benefit concert at the Bombay race course ground to refurbish the turf building. I bought a ticket for Rs 5 and got a rear block seat. The Shankarabharanam alapana that day and the niraval at "*Parutha vil ivan kaikkul pokumo pokatho, parka venumentror asai*" (Arunachala Kavi kriti) is still ringing in my ears. In that kriti, M. S. visualised the theme of Sita wondering if Rama would be able to lift the big bow off the ground to win her hand and she emotively rendered it. Out of the many concerts of M. S. in the Shanmukhananda auditorium that I have attended, the one where she did an exquisite alapana of Shankarabaranam and sang a bhava-replete "*Sarjadala netri*", a composition of Shyama Sastri extolling Devi, particularly lingers in my memory.

The most cherished moment of my life was when I interviewed M. S. at the suggestion of my friend Shri. T. T. Vijayaraghavan, Assistant Editor, 'The Economic Times'. It was for the Sunday magazine of the 'The Times of India' when she was awarded the 'Sangeetha Kalanidhi' from the Music Academy, the first woman to get the honour.

I met M. S. with Sadasivam at Meena Sadan, the residence of 'Kalki' Kannan. M. S. on seeing my right hand without four fingers (lost in a rail mishap) became emotional and commented, "what a loss for an editor whose job it is to write!" I told her that I had adjusted to the new situation and performed all activities with the left hand and had carried on in life.

Sadasivam told me to write the questions and said that he would think and write the answers and later would ask Kannan to deliver it to me. M. V. Kamath, The Editor, displayed it across six columns, a half page, a rarity. Readers responded with delight.

M. S. appreciated and encouraged artistes of the younger generation. Even while staying in the rented house at Kotturpuram suffering indifferent health, she always made the time to meet admiring young learners. She lived for music and dedicated her life for that. An exemplary personality, she will inspire generations to come.



◀ N. Hariharan

N. Hariharan, a member of the Sabha, is a former Assistant Editor of "The Times of India", Bombay, who wrote reviews of music concerts and dance performances for the paper for several decades.



A Divine Association

Ganga Rajan

Much has been said and written about M. S. Amma's divine music. To me, she was divinity personified! She has touched my life musically as well as spiritually in an association that lasted close to six decades!

I met M. S. Amma for the first time at a wedding reception. Though she was sitting alone, I was young and was scared of talking to her. So, I only told her my name and how our family enjoyed her music. I was wonderstruck by her beautiful smile and was drawn deeply towards her.

I became her ardent fan and would attend all her performances. Out of fear, I never went on stage to meet her. I used to write letters to her with my review of her performances. Only when I wrote a letter once using my father's letterhead, did they come to know that I was the daughter of Mr. K. Sambamurthy, Director, Jupiter Press Pvt Ltd - a well-known printing press at that time. When I received a photo of her by post, my father jokingly said, "This is for you to worship!" I took this literally and the photo did go to my puja shelf and yes, I used to meditate in front of her portrait!



My Goddess - Ganga Rajan with M. S.

At a wedding a few months later, when my father was introduced to M. S. Amma and Sadasivam mama, they enquired about me. Mr. Sadasivam made me sit next to Amma. When *payasam* (sweet) was served to them, he asked for a spare tumbler and told her, "give some *payasam* to your *sishtai*." I was surprised and thrilled.

From then on, I became a frequent visitor at Kalki gardens and I started going along with her for all her performances.



At their house



I used to travel with them in the car sitting next to her. Sitting right in front of her during the performances, I used to watch how she pronounced the words, how and where she took the breath and how she brought the bhava in each song.

M. S. Amma's music reflects the navarasas that a dance drama would display. But 'Anger' and 'Disgust' could never be there in her music as her mind was so sathvik. If *Bhogindrasayinam* in Kunthalavarali depicted valour and *Dolayamam* in Khamas depicted delight, then how did she bring out the rasa *Ashcharyam*? Simple! She always put the audience in a wondrous rapture as to how a human being could sing so divinely!

Her music reflected her inner peace, tranquility and harmony. She was at ease both while singing a slow song as well as a fast piece. She was very comfortable, her voice very clear in the lowest note and the highest note in any raga. All this stood me in good stead when I did my Diploma in Advanced Carnatic Vocal Classical from Shanmukhananda Fine Arts and Sangeetha Sabha.



Ganga learning the intricacies and nuances

I once asked M. S. Amma whether such sweet music came out of her throat just like that or did she have to put in effort? To this, she said, "I produce the music in such a way it sounds melodious and perfect".

The following incident that happened in my life showcases her affection for me and also her deep kindness. Once, when her kutcheri got cancelled due to heavy rain, she sat right there on the mat with her tambura and sang a sublime Kalyani exclusively for me, just so that I should not return home disappointed! Such was her love!

Later, when I taught music to my students and would take them to seek her blessings, she would always praise my efforts and the way I had trained them. Such was her kindness and compassion!



With my students - seeking Amma's blessings





His Affectionate daughter

While she was touring the U. S., performing from coast to coast, my father forbade me from writing to her saying that I should not disturb her during international travel. I was very sad. Soon, I received a big picture post card from Mr. Sadasivam enquiring as to why there were no letters from me and that there should have been at least a letter per week! He had ended the letter with the phrase, "Your Affectionate Appa". That really touched my father and he realised how I had conquered their hearts.

She used to tell me, "Anything you do for the self - for *Atmatrupti*, will be the best. Try to please the Almighty and your growth is imminent".

Seeing my intense devotion towards her, she once advised me, "Transfer your bhakti from me to the Paramacharya (Kanchi) and see how you will prosper." She then gave me a big and beautiful picture of the Acharya to follow her advice.

My Guru in Mumbai, Smt. Kalyani Sharma, had composed music for the Kanchi Mahaswami Pancharatnam, the lyrics for which had been written by Smt. Lakshmi Raghavan of Mumbai. We all met M. S. Amma at her residence in the year 2002. We sang one Pancharatnam before her. She greatly appreciated the compositions and the singing. From then on, I undertook the mission of popularising these songs among school students. I first performed with children of PSBB (a school in Chennai) at Bharata Kalachar, Shri YGP Auditorium. A week before that, I visited M. S. Amma and took her blessings.



Taking blessings

The programme was on the evening of 10th December, 2004 and on 11th December, 2004, she passed away. It appeared as though she waited for a day just so that I could complete my first step in the mission of popularising the Kanchi Mahaswami Pancharatnam.

Since I got recognition in PSBB school, I requested Mrs. YGP to allow me to train her students to give a tribute to M. S. Amma. She agreed at once and in the programme, amongst other songs, was my all-time favourite Bharatiyar song, *Neenjukku Needhiyum*. In that song, the line '*kumbitta neramum shakthi yenralunai kumbiduvan maname*' (if worshipping you is energy for me, I will continue to worship you) captures what M. S. Amma meant to me!





When I met her for the first time, I had nothing in me to gain her love and affection to this intensity. What attracted us to each other can only be attributed to *Poorva Karma* for her and *Poorva Janma Sukrutham* for me! To me, she was an embodiment of divinity! Just thoughts of her purified me and gave me energy in my life's endeavour. It is said that Vedanta will appeal only to a purified mind. Today, if I am a devoted student of scriptures under Swami Paramarthananda, my mind must have been sufficiently purified by my association with her divine personality!

I realise how appropriately the lovely 'Bhaja Govindam' lyrics given below describes what M. S. Amma's association brought to my life :

*satsangatwe nissangatwam
nissangatwe nirmohatwam
nirmohatwe nischalatatwam
nischalatatwe jeevanmukthih*

The company of the good weans one away from false attachments; when attachment is lost, delusion ends; when delusion ends, the mind becomes unwavering and steady. An unwavering and steady mind is merited for Jeevan Mukti i.e liberation even in this life.



◀ Ganga Rajan

Ganga Rajan lives in Chennai, teaches Carnatic music and pursues Vedanta.

A Memorable Meeting

Maya Srinivasan

As a 11 year old learning Carnatic music, I was actively encouraged by my parents to attend kutcheries by almost all famous artistes who came to perform at the Malleshwaram Sangeetha Sabha in Bangalore. I had the privilege of having my *periyappa*, E. N. Sitaraman organise these kutcheries as the Secretary of the Sabha.

He made it a point to sign up the most incredible list of artistes to perform and then hosted them as his guests in his home for a meal before or after their performances.



The Malleshwaram Sangeetha Sabha members



These visits were my most favourite times because I felt so thrilled to be sitting with these famous, talented and distinguished artistes and listen to their conversations with all my family members. The conversations would inevitably turn to music and of course I could not wait to be asked to perform for these incredible musicians!!

My proud moments would be their attention to 'insignificant' me, the 11 year old, who craved their feed back and praise.

One such unforgettable moment was afternoon tea with M. S. Subbulakshmi Amma along with Sadasivam mama and Radha mami.

I could not believe my good fortune as I was told by my parents that we were going to my uncle's house that afternoon to "see the great M. S. Amma."



M. S. performing at the Malleswaram Sangeetha Sabha

My uncle informed us that they were very short on time and it would be a very quick visit. But in the short time that they stayed, M. S. mami as I called her then, asked me if I liked music and if I was pursuing it. I remember telling her very proudly that I did and that I could sing for her too. She immediately asked me to sing a song for her and I picked *Narayana ninna namadha smaraneya* to sing.

She listened very patiently (like she had all the time in the world!) and this experience was like sitting across one's aunt or grandmother and singing for them. She heard me finish the entire song and then told me that she thought I had a very beautiful voice which was going to sound even better as I got older and the one thing that I needed to remember was to practise everyday. She then, went on to ask if I would like to sing another song for her.

This was high praise coming from the doyen of music and I could not help years later feel so blessed to have had this rare one on one opportunity with the great M. S. Amma. She exhibited an incredible calm and peace around her and to treat a young person with so much respect was indeed something that I cherish.

Almost 15 years later, I happened to be on the same train a few seats away from her and I went up to her to say my namaskarams and introduced myself as E. N. Sitaraman's niece. She asked me how he was doing and took the time to have a short chat with me and was extremely unassuming and humble. She was truly a 'lady' who had a kind and calm persona and it was obvious that people meant a lot to her. She took the time to respect people in spite of her busy schedule and fame.



◀ *Maya Srinivasan*

Maya Srinivasan lives in Sunnyvale, California, U.S.A and actively pursues Carnatic music and teaches students there.



Shuddha Hridayam

Priya Murali

The first time I saw M. S. Amma was at M. G. Balasubramaniam mama's (referred to as MGB mama) house back in the early 1980s. MGB mama's father Manakkal Ganesh Iyer and Sadasivam mama were cousins, children of brothers. MGB mama and his wife Vishalam mami were like godparents to our family and we were at their bungalow in Thiruvanmiyur for every occasion - from *Pillayar Chaturthi* to *Navarathri* to *Varalakshmi nonbu* and more. I used to accompany my maternal grandmother Ponnamma patti, sit by her side and help her while she made white *kozhakkattai choppus* or artfully braided *5-suthu kai murukkus* on a large white dhoti.

When I was in my second grade, I remember M. S. Amma coming for a *Varalakshmi nonbu* to MGB mama's house. Back then, neither was I aware of her glory nor was I a connoisseur of Carnatic music by any measure. But I remember being simply entranced by her rendition of *Vandinam muralum solai* in Todi. I do not know if it was the tune, the very storybook-like lyrics, or her rendition itself. Even while she was singing, I simply sat beside her mesmerised and continued to admire the impeccably strung *gundu malli charam* that adorned her round-as-a-pie kondai. Soon after her offering was over, she smiled at me and asked me if I knew to sing. I said that I did not know to sing but mentioned that I was learning Bharatanatyam. She looked at my mother and softly asked, "*aaduvula kozhandhai*"? And soon enough, a little girl clad in M. S. blue *pattu pavadai* was dancing to the *padam, Natanam aadinar*. As soon as my piece was over, she lovingly smiled at me, took *thambulam* and left. My mother (Lalitha Narayanaswami) held her hand gently and accompanied her to her white ambassador car. As we were walking back from the car, I asked my mother who M. S. Amma was to this family and how she knew her. On our drive back home that evening, my mother went on to narrate her memories of M. S. Amma back in Kalki Gardens in the late 60s/early 70s.



Priya Murali as a child talking to M. S. Amma

Soon after my maternal grandfather's demise, our family was separated and my mother Lalitha, was sent off to Chennai to study at a boarding school. Ponnamma patti, my maternal grandmother, a lonely widow at the time, was beckoned by some gentle souls in Chennai to help with making *kai murukku*, *kozhakkattai* and *bakshanams* for festivals. Paatti won everyone over with her love and the MGBs ended up adopting paatti and my amma. It was during one such occasion that Sadasivam Mama met my mother at Thiruvanmiyur and took her to Kalki Gardens. She helped with sorting pages for Kalki magazine and assisted him by doing small chores. He told Vishalam Mami that my mother was a bright little young girl and that she deserved to work in a corporate setting and in that way could also support patti





and the rest of the family. It was Sadasivam mama who secured employment for my mother at EID Parry. It was M. S. Amma and Sadasivam mama who took her in their car for her first day at work. It was M. S. Amma who bought my mother her first saree for her first day at work. There are books, blogs, magazines and journals that sing praises of M. S. Amma's Carnatic renditions and bhakti-laden music. But here was a personification of divinity, benevolence and *shuddha hridayam*!! To this date, my mother attributes her career, life and joys to M. S. Amma and Sadasivam mama!

I remember that my mother was the one who was entrusted the responsibility of fetching M. S. Amma her specially strung jasmine flowers from Parry's corner for every *kutcheri*. In those days, flowers were not strung using sewing thread but with strings from the banana plants. My mother used to say that Amma was specific about those strings and the way the *malli charams* were strung. They had to be still *unblossomed mottus (buds)* when they were bought so that they would bloom only when perched on Amma's *kondai*!

Many moons later, in 1984, we had been to visit her before my Bharatanatyam arangetram. She instantly recognised my mother and they spoke for a long time, recounting the 'Thiruvanmiyur days'. When she heard about my arangetram, she instantly reminisced, "*naan dhaan pathirukkene kozhandhai aadi!*" Such was her memory!! She blessed me and gave all her best wishes for the event. It was a very special day for me!

We then visited M. S. Amma again in 1999 to seek her blessings for my wedding which was scheduled to be held in April. Even though many years had passed, she still remembered us and gave us a warm welcome. She had become a little frail after Sadasivam mama's passing, yet she fondly enquired about my mother's employment at Parry amidst other things. She asked me what I would be doing in the U.S. after going there, whether I would be pursuing studies or other passions, like dance. I just smiled back at her not knowing what to say.



Priya Murali and Lalitha narayanaswamy with M. S. Amma

Whenever I listen to my favourite renditions of M. S. Amma today, be it *Akhilandeshwari* in Dwijavanthi ragam or her unparalleled Annamacharya kritis or *Konji Konji Vaa Guhane* in Khamas or the timeless *Bhaja Govindam*, I just travel back in time to that day in the early 1980s at Thiruvanmiyur. Nothing less than a divine blessing!



◀ Priya Murali

Priya Murali, a student of Guru Adyar K. Lakshman of Kalakshetra has performed at prestigious sabhas and dance festivals in Chennai, New York and Seattle. She currently resides in Tonka Bay, Minnesota, U.S.A., and is the founder of the 'The Flute 'N' Feather' dance company in Minnesota.



The Divine Touch

Jayashri Suresh

There are so many inexplicable events that happen in our lives that remain miraculous and defy logical explanation! I was a girl of just 13 when very suddenly I started getting songs on the Kanchi Acharya - our Guru.

A little background needs to be covered here... My mother, when she became pregnant with me, was told by the Mahaswami in her dream that she would get a child who will sing a *paamaalai* - a garland of songs on him!! Ever since I began talking, my mother had waited with bated breath for this eventuality to occur.

Our family has been a follower of the Kanchi *matam* for generations. So right from childhood, I had vivid memories of taking *darshan* of 'Periava' as we referred to him. But, the epiphany about that supreme Guru and his all-pervading grace and greatness occurred quite suddenly in one incident.

The seer was touring Maharashtra and he was in a tiny town called Akkalkot when my family went to seek his blessings. As we waited one early morning, he was in prayer. The early rays of the sun fell on his face lighting it like molten gold and very suddenly and inexplicably, my throat felt choked with emotion and I felt myself crying! I couldn't fathom why my eyes kept leaking tears of ecstasy and why I was feeling extremely overwhelmed! Still can't pinpoint what it was...it was as if a sudden understanding of his benevolence, spiritual power and a revelation about how lucky I was to have a Guru like him had blossomed within me and all I could think at that time was, 'My Guru has showered countless blessings on me but I have nothing to offer my Guru!' It seemed to me that I had been the beneficiary of some deep grace and I remember feeling that something within me had altered irrevocably. Within a week after our return to Mumbai, the first song came.

Now comes the part about M. S. Amma. As everyone is aware, M. S. Amma was a deep devotee of the Paramacharya and when she heard that I was getting songs on *Periava* through my *maami* who was related to her, she wanted to meet me. In early 1985, I had the unforgettable experience of my life when I came face to face with the legend at her daughter Smt. Vijaya Rajendran's house. Understandably, I was excited, nervous and disbelieving all at the same time.

She made me sit down in front of her and asked with wonder, "*swamigal mela pattu varudhame kozhandai*" and went on to exclaim, "*evvalavu koduththu vachchurikke! enna adisayam!!*"

She then asked me the details about how and when the songs started coming. I remember trying to tell her every detail about how I felt and about what had happened within me on that momentous trip to Akkalkot. I felt elated because as my words came forth hesitantly trying to verbalise an event of great import, I realised that somehow she understood what I had experienced. The wonder and joy of it was there in her eyes and expression!!

After this, she softly asked, "*kanney, paadi kamikkarayaa enakku, onnoda guru paattai??*"

I was tongue-tied with wonder and nonplussed that this legendary doyenne was actually sitting in front of me, waiting for me to sing!! I sang the four songs that had come by then, one by one, before her. She had her eyes closed tightly and heard them with a slight smile on her lips but with tears trickling from her eyes!!





I remember feeling extremely shy once the songs got over. She simply sighed, opened her eyes as if she had come out from a deep inner prayer and wiped her eyes. She then took my hands and pressed my palms reverentially to her eyes saying, "*parama bhagyam, parama bhagyam*" and then kissed them. I can never forget that touch till my dying breath!

Like all events of great magnitude, the relevance and import of that meeting didn't quite sink in until much later. What was it about her persona that defied description, I have often wondered. There was a certain luminosity, incandescence, a certain other-worldly quality, a mix of delicacy, simplicity, sincerity and soul-deep devotion that had transcended her from a human by birth to a kind of divine being by conduct!!

Only a person immersed in guru bhakti would be able to move away from her massive fame, glory, adulation and cult status and come to partake in the magic that had happened in a 13 year old's life!! That day, I truly felt that I had been 'touched' by the divine!!



◀ Jayashri Suresh

Jayashri Suresh is the Assistant Editor of 'Shanmukha'.

Ethereal Elegance

Jyothi Mohan

The year was either 1978 or 1979. I was fairly new to Mumbai and someone told us that there was to be a fund-raiser for the Chinmaya Yuva Kendra by the legend M. S. Subbulakshmi at the prestigious Shanmukhananda Hall.

With great difficulty, I managed to get two tickets for the ground floor and two for the last row of the second balcony! It was a houseful event. We waited with bated breath for the kutcheri to commence. Her graceful, smiling face and divine voice mesmerised the audience which listened in rapt attention.

Suddenly, there was a power failure and the hall was plunged in darkness. Unfazed, M. S. Amma continued to sing. The 3000-strong audience in the auditorium listened in pindrop silence. It was sheer magic, listening to her crystal clear evocative voice minus the microphones.

She could be heard in the last row downstairs as well as in the last row in the second balcony where I was seated! The ethereal picture of the dark stage, with the kuthuvilakku casting a gentle light on her radiant face and sparkling diamonds is still etched in my memory. Soon after, a cat, drawn probably by the mellifluous strains of music, made its appearance on one corner of the stage, listened awhile before disappearing into the darkness! Memories of that wonderful kutcheri still give me goosebumps when I remember that unforgettable evening.



◀ Jyothi Mohan

Jyothi Mohan is a Bharatanatyam Guru and a faculty member of the vidyalaya.



What the legends said...



Semmnagudi with his 'sishtai' M. S.

Semmnagudi Srinivasa Iyer

The Sangita Pitamaha Semmnagudi Srinivasa Iyer noted several special qualities about M. S. Subbulakshmi's voice. He said, "her voice is not just pleasing and pitch perfect, but it has a *reenkaram* (reverberation), that sounds the same up close and at a distance; it is not distorted or weakened when you hear it from different directions. It has *ghatram* (weight) and remarkable continuity. When you strike a temple bell, the echo continues even after the sound ends, until the next striking. Her voice has that quality. When she stops singing, the *naadam* (sound) continues.

She was a *gnyanasti*, one who had the discerning taste, intelligence and a relish for the best, and therefore is able to discard anything less than the cream. "*Yedhu sramamo adhu avalukku sulabhama vandhadu!*"



Musiri Subramaniya Iyer

Musiri Subramaniya Iyer

Musiri Subramaniya Iyer had the highest regard for M. S.'s music. Once when she performed at the Central Music College, where he was the Principal, he introduced her in glowing terms and ended with an anecdote. At a festival down south where he was scheduled to sing the day after M. S., Musiri asked his hostess for hot water to clear his throat. The grim old lady went to the kitchen, uttering audibly, "So? Hot water for the throat! Who does he think he is? M. S. Subbulakshmi?"



Mudicondan Venkatrama Iyer

Mudicondan Venkatrama Iyer

On her being conferred the Sangita Kalanidhi, veteran vidwan Mudicondan Venkatrama Iyer said,

"I don't know whether this is a matter of pride for M. S. or a matter of pride for the Academy!"





M. S. with Lata Mangeshkar

Lata Mangeshkar

When the legendary Lata Mangeshkar, then a lanky girl in twin plaits, heard M.S. during the studio recording of Meera's songs in Bombay, she refused to record after her. "Not today, not after that!", she said.



M. L. Vasanthakumari

M. L. Vasanthakumari

M. L. Vasanthakumari saw that celebrityhood has left M. S. unchanged, that she remained just as childlike, pleasant, gentle in speech and sociable. "I think her eminence is undimmed because of her faith in God, her simplicity, unquestioning submission to her husband's will, respect for elders, her belief that there is much to be learnt from the world and her desire to learn more".



Alathur Brothers

Alathur Brothers

Hearing her pallavi in Begada, *Kailashapathe*, *Pashupathe*, *Umapathe*, *Namostute* set by Musiri for her Academy concert, laya veterans Alathur brothers came to call. When a diffident M. S. explained that it was a simple tala structure and nothing remotely as complex as their laya wizardry, the brothers said to M. S. amma's delight and also embarrassment,

"What do you mean simple? The grid was simple but the way you handled it was not simple!"

"Amma, one day, we too want to get applause for our raga exposition as you do", they added appreciatively.

M.S. and Radha - A saga of Steadfast Devotion by Gowri Ramnarayan.



List of Suprabhatams and Other Devotional Songs

1. Kamakshi Suprabhatam
2. Shri Venkateshwara Suprabhatam
3. Kasi Vishwanatha Suprabhatam
4. Rameshwara Ramanatha Suprabhatam
5. Meenakshi Suprabhatam
6. Vishnu Sahasranamam
7. Bhaja Govindam
8. Ganesha Pancharatnam
9. Madhurashtakam
10. Durga Pancharatnam
11. Govindashtakam
12. Hanuman Chalisa
13. Thotakashtakam
14. Kanakadhara Stotram
15. Shakthi Om
16. Vinayagar Agaval
17. Shiva Panchakshara Stotram
18. Sri Ranga Gadyam
19. Sri Lakshmi Ashtotharam
20. Namaramayanam
21. Annapoornashtakam
22. Venkateshwara Karavalamba Stotram



List of Kritis Popularised by M. S.



Enaati Nomu Phalamu	Bhairavi	Adi	Thyagaraja
O Rangashayee	Kambhoji	Adi	Thyagaraja
Naradamuni	Pantuvareali	Adi	Thyagaraja
Pakkala Nilabadi	Kharaharapriya	Misrachapu	Thyagaraja
Rama Nannu Brovara	Hari Kambhoji	Roopakam	Thyagaraja
Seethamma Mayamma	Vasanta	Roopakam	Thyagaraja
Soga Soga Mridanga	Shriranjani	Roopakam	Thyagaraja
Sobillu Saptaswara	Jaganmohini	Roopakam	Thyagaraja
Terateeyaga rada	Gaulipantu	Adi	Thyagaraja
Venuganaloluni	Kedaragowla	Roopakam	Thyagaraja
Vaachaama Gocharama	Kaikavasi	Deshaadi	Thyagaraja
Akhilandeshwari	Dwijavanti	Adi	Muthuswami Dikshitar
Kanjadalayataksi	Kamalamanohari	Adi	Muthuswami Dikshitar
Hiranmayeem	Lalita	Roopakam	Muthuswami Dikshitar
Meenaksi Memudam	Poorvikalyani	Adi	Muthuswami Dikshitar
Shree Mahaganapatiravatu maam	Gowla	Misrachapu	Muthuswami Dikshitar
Rangapura vihara	Brindavana Saranga	Roopakam	Muthuswami Dikshitar
Kanakashaila viharini	Punnagavarali	Adi	Shyama Shastri
Sarojadala Netri	Shankarabharanam	Adi	Shyama Shastri
Aliveni Endu Cheyvu	Kuranji	Misrachapu	Swati Tirunal
Bhogeendra Shayinam	Kuntalavarali	Khandachapu	Swati Tirunal
Bhavayami Raghuramam	Ragamalika	Adi	Swati Tirunal
Rama Rama Gunaseema	Simhendramadhyamam	Adi	Swati Tirunal
Brochevarevarura	Khamas	Adi	Mysore Vasudevachar
Melaragamalika	72 melakarta ragas	Adi	Mahavaidyanatha Sivan
Nee Irangayenil	Athana	Adi	Papanasam Sivan
Paraatpara Parameshwara	Vachaspati	Adi	Papanasam Sivan
Srinivasa Tiruvengadamudaiyan	Hamsanandi	Adi	Papanasam Sivan
Ikanaina	Pushpalatika	Adi	Tirupati Narayanaswamy
Viriboni	Bhairavi	Ata	Pachimiriam Adiappaiah
Shambho Mahadeva	Bhouli	Roopakam	Neelakantha Sivan
Maate Malayadhwaja	Khamas	Adi	Harikesanallur Muthaiah
			Bhagavata
Shree Chamundeshwari	Bilahari	Adi	Mysore Vasudevachar
Shree Kamakotipeetha	Saveri	Adi	Mysore Sadashiva Rao
Bhavayami Gopalabalam	Yaman	Khandachapu	Annamacharya
Ksheerabdhi Kanyakaku	Kurunji	Khandachapu	Annamacharya
Sriman Narayana	Bowli	Adi	Annamacharya
Dolayam	Khamas	Eka	Annamacharya
Bhavamulona	Shuddha dhanyasi	Adi	Annamacharya
Brahma kadigina	Mukhari	Adi	Annamacharya
Deva devam bhaje	Hindolam	Khandachapu	Annamacharya
Narayana ninna	Shuddha dhanyasi	Khandachapu	Purandaradasa
Jagadodharana	Kapi	Adi	Purandaradasa
Naanege badavanu	Behag	Adi	Purandaradasa
Katrinile varum geetham	Sindhubhairavi	Adi	Kalki Krishnamoorthy
Kurai onrum illai	Ragamalika	Adi	Kalki Krishnamoorthy
Vandadum Solai	Hari Kambhoji	Adi	Kalki Krishnamoorthy
More To Giridhar Gopala	Jhinjhoti	Adi	Meerabai
Hari Tum Haro	Darbaari	Adi	Meerabai
Pag ghungroo	Ragamalika	Adi	Meerabai
Hari Darshan Ki Pyaasi	Behag	Adi	Surdas
Oli padaittha	Ragamalika	Adi	Subramanya Bharati
Maitreem Bhajata	Ragamalika	Adi	Chandrasekarendra
			Saraswati
Vadavaraiyai Matthaki	Ragamalika	Adi	Ilango Adigal
Bruhi Mukundethi	Kurunji	Adi	Sadashiva Brahmendra
Valshnava jana to	Khamaaaj	Adi	Narsi Mehta

Compiled by Nalini Dinesh



Kurai Onrum Illai



She brought tears to the eyes of millions when she sang *Kurai Onrum Illai, Govinda* at the end of her concerts, a song she immortalised with her unique blend of voice, music and most importantly, devotion.

M. S. Subbulakshmi, simply 'MS' to every music lover, has held the city of Mumbai in a spell, several times over with her spiritually enthralling music. Hindustani maestro, Bade Ghulam Ali Khan called her 'Suswaralakshmi Subbulakshmi' while describing the effect of her music on people.

It has been a decade and more since she merged with eternity. Even today, she is an inspiring role model, not only for the miracle of her culture but also for her humility, compassion, consideration for others and unwavering principles of conduct. Her quest for perfection, sincerity of effort and concentration were not reserved for the stage alone. They were visible as much as the camphor light that she circled around the Gods and Gurus in her puja room, as in her day-to-day dealings with people. That is why she filled us with the same rapture when she sang a prayer at home, as she did on the concert stage with her eyes closed. Meticulousness was a constant factor in everything she did. Her unquestioning faith in God was equalled, by her unflinching commitment to her Art.

May her spirit light in each of us, a little flame of her divine music. A music that transported millions to a different world where one could say *Kurai Onrum Illai, Govinda*.





M. S. Subbulakshmi
1916-2004

ODE TO A NIGHTINGALE

The singing legend lives on in her suprabhathams and bhajans.

When Jawaharlal Nehru heard Carnatic vocalist M. S. Subbulakshmi sing, he said, "Who am I, a mere prime minister before the Queen of Music!"

The voice that moved the world will be heard no more.

As artiste extraordinaire, Subbulakshmi has the unique ability to transform the singing experience from the mundane to the divine. A rich resonant timbre, complete *shruti* alignment, correct diction and raga bhava - it was a rare combination that created the legend. Unlike today's musicians trapped in external fineries, Subbulakshmi had an instinctive feel for the meaning of the text and each word, so aptly selected, stood out like a gem.

Subbulakshmi or Kunjamma as she was fondly called was the daughter of Madurai Shanmukhavadiyu, a veena player. With a violinist for a sister, a brother who played the mrudangam and the mellifluous environs of Madurai, singing came more naturally to her than talking. So Subbulakshmi's first performance came at the age of 10 and from there on, music became a habit of a lifetime, as did awards and adulations. After her marriage in 1940, her husband and freedom fighter T. Sadasivam, took charge of her career. In fact, when she was conferred the Bharat Ratna in 1993, she said, "On this occasion I cannot but think of the loving care and guidance I received from my late husband all through my life."





In a way and despite her husband's support, Subbulakshmi was a feminist. Having breached the bastion of male singers, she was happy to see an increasing number of women enrolling in music colleges and participating in temple festivals. In 1968, when the Music Academy honoured her with the Sangeetha Kalanidhi, she said, "In conferring the honour the Academy has sought to honour the womanhood of this country."

While Sitar maestro Pandit Ravi Shankar popularised Hindustani Classical music abroad, Subbulakshmi introduced Carnatic music to the West. Her biggest contribution to Carnatic Music was the revival of the kritis of the 15th century composer Annamacharya. Subbulakshmi acted in four films: Sevasadanam, Sakuntalai, Savitri and Meera.

After 'Meera', Mahatma picked her to sing two of his favourite bhajans, *Vaishnava janato* and *Hari tum haro jan ki bhir*. It was also after Meera that she decided to dedicate herself to classical and devotional music. A musician who bridged the regional gap, Subbulakshmi sang in 10 languages, be it Marathi abhangs, Hindi bhajans, the verses of Guru Nanak or Rabindra Sangeet.

Subbulakshmi was indeed an icon that could bring the world to its knees. Her renderings moved violinist Yehudi Menuhin to tears. Bade Ghulam Ali Khan called her 'Suswarlakshmi Subbulakshmi', while Helen Keller once said, "You sing like an angel." She could captivate the people with an occasional lift of an eyebrow and a beatific smile meant not for the audience but for the divine. "Indian music is oriented solely to the end of divine communication. If I have done something in this respect, it is entirely due to the grace of the Almighty who has chosen my humble self as a tool", she said.

Subbulakshmi is not dead. She is alive in the temples, the suprabhatams, the kritis and the bhajans. She will remain in that divine voice forever.







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of Bliss



Tyagaraja Sadasivam married M. S. Subbulakshmi on 10th July 1940 at Thiruneermalai. They lived happily for 57 eventful years. With him, she became the Queen of Music.

*Today we Celebrate
75 Years ("Amrita Mahotsav")
of this Beautiful Couple
who together scripted a new high
in Indian Music.*

In all her concerts, she urged Damyatha, Datta, Dayadhvam (restraint, generosity, compassion) – MaitreemBhajatha. The couple practiced these all through their life.

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On the Amrita Mahotsav of their togetherness in life, the Society bows in reverence to this divine couple and rededicates itself, with renewed vigour to the cause of education.

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Pilgrimage to Perfection



Sri. Shanmukhananda Fine Arts & Sangeetha Sabha

When Jawaharlal Nehru heard M.S. Subbulakshmi sing, he said, "Who am I, a mere Prime Minister, before the Queen of Music."



Sri. Shanmukhananda Fine Arts & Sangeetha Sabha

The voice that moved the world, fell silent on 11th December, 2004. Her voice held the world in a spell. She sang in 10 languages. Her repertoire was prodigious, packed with songs of every genre, setting high standards in purity of diction and emotional content. Her vocal communication transcended words.

Subbulakshmi became a cult figure not only as a singer par excellence, but she remains as one of the most loved representatives of the best in Indian traditional values. Her patriotism was no bar to her belief in universal brotherhood, a profound religiosity enhanced her respect for other creeds and conservatism underlined concern for others. Austerity and sacrifice were no catchwords. They were a way of life.



Bharati Ratna Dr. M. S. Subbulakshmi Auditorium

It is given only to a chosen few to leave indelible, impressive prints in the verdant spheres of any art form. MS was an artiste extraordinaire whose music transformed the ambience from the mundane to divine. She lives in the hearts and minds of every lover of music. Staunch in her culture, she remained a stranger to bigotry. She had known what it was to be poor, insecure and marginalized. It is her empathy for the downtrodden in daily life, not just in cheques donated on platforms, that gave her music the quality of mercy.

The timeless, priceless quality of M.S.'s music would always remain a glorious chapter in the history of Indian music. The singing legend lives on through her suprabhatams and bhajans. She is alive in the temples and would remain in that divine voice forever.

As we celebrate the birth centenary of this Nightingale of India, we rededicate ourselves to the cause of our blessed land's glorious heritage, tradition, art and culture. We shall incorporate into our lives a little of the spirit that animated



M.S.! We will strive to walk the way she has shown us. May her grace descend on us and vitalise us in our **PILGRIMAGE TO PERFECTION !**

Dated : 16th September, 2015